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# DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the  
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Disciples of Christ Historical Society was established in 1941 "to maintain and further interest in religious heritage, backgrounds, origins, development, and general history of Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ and related groups."

Members of the Society receive *DISCIPLIANA* quarterly, along with other benefits. Annual membership categories are as follows: Sustaining - \$50 to \$249, Participating - \$25 to \$49, Regular - \$15, Students - \$7.50, Canadian and Overseas - \$20. Single payment Life Memberships are: Life - \$250, Life Link - \$500, Life Patron - \$1,000.

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## *—From the Editor's Desk*

The three articles in this issue, though they deal with distinctly different subjects in the history of the Stone-Campbell Movement, relate to the question of what it means to make the Christian witness and how that witness is to be judged.

Clark M. Williamson's discussion of "Confusions in Disciples Talk and Practice" was originally presented to the Stone-Campbell Historians Seminar conducted at the Society's Thomas W. Phillips Library and Archives, April 29-30, 1994. The general theme of the 1994-1996 series of seminars is "How Does A Nineteenth Century North American Religious Movement Face the Twenty-First Century?" The specific theme of the 1994 session was "From Modern Theology to a Post-Modern World." Williamson identifies the philosophical underpinnings of a critical flaw in much contemporary, popular Disciples theological discourse—the things that many Disciples ministers and laity say (or do not say) about their faith. The other two papers from the 1994 seminar, one by Richard Phillips looking at the Christian Churches and Church of Christ (sometimes referred to as the Independent Christian Churches) and the other by Kathy Pulley focusing on the Churches of Christ were published respectively in the Fall 1994 and Winter 1994 issues.

Karen Leigh Stroup's exploration of "The 'Unacceptable Face' of Disciples History" examines the various explanations that have been put forward for the Jonestown tragedy, an event that occurred at the direction of Jim Jones, an ordained Disciples of Christ minister, and involved the mass suicide of 900 members of the Peoples Temple, a congregation that was listed in the Year Book of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Noting that the Peoples Temple had ties to other congregations of the Stone-Campbell Movement, Stroup asks what particular factors in the life and witness of the Peoples Temple caused the suicides that rightly horrified the American public.

Jim Mankin's retrospective on George A. Klingman, "A Little Man with a Great Brain," is the story of an early twentieth century leader of the Churches of Christ. Klingman was a preacher and educational pioneer associated with the early history of Abilene Christian University. Toward the end of his career, Klingman taught for a brief period at Cincinnati Bible Seminary, an institution established by conservative members of the Disciples of Christ. At issue in Mankin's treatment of Klingman, as in the articles by Williamson and Stroup, is the appropriate measure of the Christian life and witness.

## — *From the President's Desk*

A group of mature travellers came to visit the Historical Society recently. In visiting with them I talked with a gentleman who was excited because he found a file on his grandfather which included a picture of his grandfather he had never seen. "Can I get a copy made?" "Certainly."

A little later he found in his grandfather's records reference to Pompey. "Would you know where that would be?" Our microfilmer heard the question and said "Yes, that is United Church in Pompey, New York. I have recently microfilmed material for that congregation." He was interested in these records also. He will not forget his visit to the beautiful Phillips Memorial Building filled with church history, for here he became better acquainted with his own family.

George A. Buttrick, many years ago, said "The past ought to be a milestone not a millstone." How true! For so many people history is a millstone about their necks. They want to forget it, leave it behind, ignore it and if possible, erase it like a video tape. For many others, fortunately, their history is a milestone, pointing forward as they live their lives day by day as our congregations meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Certainly history is not always pretty, exciting, or glamorous, for it contains the mundane, the trials and tribulations, the in season and out of season plodding. Yet somewhere in these records are the signposts, the moments of encouragement for achievement which have made us what we are today. Those are signposts we need.

Recently with the closing of Missions Building of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indianapolis as they move into new office facilities, the Historical Society received some three hundred or more boxes of historical material. Most of it will be preserved and placed in archival arrangement for future reference, study and understanding. I can already hear the phone ringing early this Fall as we approach a General Assembly in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). There will be questions and inquiries about historical material which is here in Nashville. Harold Watkins called recently for an outline of the material the Society has on the Board of Church Extension from which he recently retired as President, as he prepares to write its history.

We could just as easily say with Dr. Buttrick "The past ought to be a stepping stone and not a stumbling block to our future." I am reminded of a recent letter received by May Reed on the Historical Society staff. The letter reads "Thank you, thank you for your letter and the enclosures, in regard to my maternal grandfather.... I am unable to describe how joyful it was to receive and read about his early years in college and his wonderful tenure as teacher of the Queen Esther Class. It brought tears to my eyes and memories of him in his latter days when I knew him so well as a caring, loving and deeply spiritual man. I was very close to my grandparents and was at the bedside when each expired." A beautiful comment on life. I am grateful that the Phillips Memorial is filled with milestones rather than millstones and serves as a stepping stone for so many joyful journeys.

# **Confusions in Disciples Talk and Practice: Theology in the Life of the Church**

by Clark M. Williamson\*

## Introduction

Initially, the comprehensive theme of the Stone-Campbell Historians Seminar was: "A 19th Century Religious Movement Faces the 21st Century: Can We Survive?" The specific theme of this 1994 session is: "Modern Theology in a Post-Modern World." The topic of this article is the larger question in its original form.

Let me articulate the reasons for my aversion to the modern/post-modern issue before turning to the question of survival. Some objections that post-modernist thinkers raise against what they term "modernism" are to the point. Post-modernism insists that Western civilization has been defined by a "center" that inevitably marginalizes everybody not identified with that "center." To the extent that this is true (but does post-modernism allow judgments of truth?), modernism is properly criticized. But what do we do with thinkers in the modern period, such as Paul Tillich, who argued that those on the margin (which he called "the boundary" or "die Grenze") are in the best position to understand things?<sup>1</sup> It seems as unlikely that the post-modernists will allow Tillich into their camp as that he fits the centrist model.

One of the better critiques of the Enlightenment challenges its foundationalism, its attempt to base thought on certainty by recurrence to its "foundations." Descartes usually serves as the arch-villain with his attempt to locate "clear and distinct" ideas that can withstand all doubt.<sup>2</sup> Foundationalism presupposes that there are clear and uninterpreted ideas or uninterpreted *sensa* on which the edifice of knowledge can be built. That all experience is theory-laden, that ordinary experience is interpreted and in the mode of what Whitehead called "symbolic reference," renders foundationalism impossible as an intellectual alternative. "If we desire a record of uninterpreted experience," said Whitehead, "we must ask a stone to record its autobiography."<sup>3</sup> Some of the targets of post-modernism, says Robert Neville, "deserve what they have been given in critique. Perhaps more important, some forms of post-modernism have provided trenchant criticisms of social injustices."<sup>4</sup> Yet in Whitehead we have quoted a thinker who would not be allowed into the post-modernist camp but who is clearly not a modernist.

This should give us pause before jumping on the post-modernist bandwagon. Whitehead stands in a non-modernist tradition that runs from Jonathan Edwards through Ralph Waldo Emerson to Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, George Herbert Mead and such contemporary thinkers as Robert Neville, Paul Weiss, Charles Hartshorne and others. None are foundationalists. The modern period is several centuries long and covers a wide geographic swath. Historians know that any such period includes an ample variety of sins and sinners. Cardinal Newman and Voltaire, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and David Friedrich

Strauss, Moses Mendelssohn and Garbiel Marcel are all “modern.” John Wesley and Alexander Campbell are modern. Are they all modernist? Centrists? Foundationalists? How shall we understand eastern European Hasidism, the pietism of Spener, or 19th-century American revivalism?

There are problems with the modern/post-modern dichotomy. As Neville puts it, “the whole idea of defining oneself as ‘post’ something requires overdetermining what you are getting beyond so as to be able to negate it totalistically.”<sup>5</sup> Is the political effect of post-modernism, paradoxically, to shut down alternatives and deprive the contemporary conversation of many diverse voices from the modern past? If so, it becomes a new centrism, marginalizing all voices but its own.<sup>6</sup>

The second reason to find the modern/post-modern dichotomy overdone is that some gains of modernity are irreversible. A theologian lecturing on what is wrong with the modern world and leaving before the discussion to make a visit to the doctor’s office is an interesting subject of study. Philosophically, the modern age is the age of freedom—freedom to do one’s own thinking and freedom from authoritarianism. Kant’s declaration “*sapere aude*” (“have the courage to do your own thinking”) and his definition of Enlightenment as “man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage” claim that to be human is to take responsibility for oneself. We could write the history of liberation movements since Kant by indicating how various groups have reappropriated his definition of Enlightenment. Women would ask why only “man’s” release from tutelage is of concern, and ThirdWorlders would claim for themselves the same freedom from oppressive authoritarianism. The “interpretation principle” of the Stone-Campbell movement, that every Christian has the right and duty of personal interpretation of the Christian faith, is a tribute to the irreversibility of the freedom from authoritarianism sought by the modern world. Franklin I. Gamwell argues that: “The choice between autonomy and heteronomy presupposes autonomy.”<sup>7</sup> According to him, “all resistance to the formal affirmation of autonomy is self-refuting, because it cannot avoid presupposing the modern commitment in the very act of questioning it.”<sup>8</sup>

The third objection is to the kind of post-modernism inspired by Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault. David Griffin terms this kind of thought “deconstructive or eliminative postmodernism,” meaning that it is an “anti-worldview: it deconstructs or eliminates the ingredients necessary for a worldview, such as God, self, purpose, meaning, a real world, and truth as correspondence.”<sup>9</sup> Although motivated by a moral interest to circumvent authoritarian modes of controlling behavior, it issues in relativism or nihilism. This becomes clear in Michel Foucault’s effort to uncover the hidden prejudices of the Enlightenment. Foucault rejects every notion that some ideas are true and some practices good. According to him, what we mean by “true” or “good” depends entirely on the realities of power in a given society. “Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth.”<sup>10</sup> What passes for reason becomes an instrument of oppression.

But the question arises: if the ideas of “good” and “true” are only instruments of oppression, whence the moral force of the assumption that oppression is bad? Foucault is “unable to account for or to justify the sort of normative political judgment he makes all the time.”<sup>11</sup> Relativism so fears absolutism and idolatry that it voids the claim to truth. The problem is that the hearts and minds of people abhor a vacuum, into which new absolutisms quickly rush. “And the last state of that person is worse than the first” (Luke 11:26).

Fourth, it is not helpful to think of ourselves as “post” something. Is it not better, as a church and theologians working on its behalf, to think of that to which our witness and reflection might contribute? Is it not better to regard ourselves as “pre” something, without pretending that we know what that might be? The future may pay no attention to either our witness or our theological reflection on it, in which case our question, “can we survive?”, will be answered negatively. We can improve upon the question “can we survive?” “Should we survive?” is a better question, and the best is: “Why should we survive?” If we tell people the truth about themselves, then I hope and think that we will survive. If we do not tell people the truth about themselves, our survival hardly matters.

Just so our church in its witness and our theology in its reflection on that witness should attend to the question: What contribution do we have to make to whatever it is that will follow us? What witness shall we offer? What truth have we to proclaim? We will find the answer to this question not by tracking the huffings and puffings of the *Zeitgeist*, but by attending to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Disciple Theology

Our specific topic is that of Disciple theology as we face the 21st century. A definition: theology is critical and constructive reflection on the witness of the church, done in the church and on its behalf. It is faith seeking understanding, a seeking that takes a critical turn when the witness upon which we reflect strikes us as problematic. Karl Barth insisted that we ask if that to which the church bears witness is indeed Jesus Christ. We start to think, usually, when we have a problem. Growing up among Disciples, I learned the Christian faith from my grandfather, a pastor for fifty-five years, from my Sunday School teachers, and from my mother. I was taught that the gospel is about the all-inclusive love of God graciously given even to us, that it requires us in turn to love God with all our selves and our neighbors as ourselves, and that such love is inseparable from matters of justice, peace, and race relations.

But I had a problem. The way in which things were often presented made them difficult to believe. Miracles happened frequently in the Bible, but not in my experience or in the science classes of the local high school. Although racism was formally rejected, it ruled the social system and the make-up of our congregation. Could I believe this stuff and does the church really mean it anyway? Those were my junior-high school

problems and I make no attempt to make my adolescent questions seem more sophisticated than they were. We start thinking because we have a problem, something about which to think. My problems have stayed with me: credibility and moral plausibility. Our witness needs to make sense and to be morally plausible. To them I have added the third and central one: appropriateness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I present this story to make a point: even junior high school kids do theology. They may not know they are doing it, but they do it. All Christians somehow understand what they believe. Not only those whom we call “theologians” do this; they are those to whom the church has given the gift of letting them spend a lot of time on it. Everybody else works it in between shifts on the assembly line or stints at the office. Even pastors do theology, when they can find time. However well or poorly, we all do it. The problem with “professional” theology is that, like varsity or professional athletics, it may be done at a level of expertise (or worse—abstraction) that discourages “amateurs” from attempting it. I use the word “amateurs” in its classical sense—those who do what they do for the love of it, not because they are paid. Once a coach at the University of Chicago was so distressed at the lack of physical activity on the part of students that he argued “that anything worth doing is worth doing badly.” The same holds true for theology: it is better to do it badly than not at all, because “badly” can be improved upon with some attention and “not at all” is no different from “badly” except that in its denial that it does theology it forgoes the possibility of doing it better.

Professional theology among the Disciples of Christ is in good shape. A consultation of the studies of it will, I think, confirm this judgment.<sup>12</sup> Disciples have at present more different kinds of theologians doing a wider variety of responsible work than in any other period of our history. Ecumenical theology, feminist theology, historical theology, systematic theology in several varieties, practical theology, theology in a pluralistic context, ecological theology, to name but some, are being actively worked on and constitute a significant contribution to the ongoing theological conversation and the life of the church.

### Popular Theology

The question as to whether our Disciples movement will or should survive is most directly a question about local congregations and pastors, because here questions and answers about matters of ultimate importance either will or will not be discussed. Regional and general units of the church also play a significant role in this regard. All the work of academic theologians will go for nought, unless it is creatively appropriated by pastors acting in their ordained role of teachers of the Christian faith. I do not mean that pastors are merely consumers of theology. Historically they were once its major producers. What is happening theologically among pastors?

This is a notoriously difficult question to answer. Each of us knows of particular congregations where the pastor is a responsible teacher of the Christian faith and engages laity in learning and thinking about

important issues. But one's general impression, and I stress "impression," is that theology, understanding the Christian faith, has a low priority among Disciples congregations and pastors.

Joseph E. Faulkner's study of the content of Disciples sermons drew some depressing conclusions. Most sermons make little attempt so to appropriate the resources of the Christian faith as to enable hearers to figure out who they are and what they should do in the situations in which they live. Language about important Christian affirmations is abstract, apparently assuming that congregations already know what major Christian teachings mean. Disciples sermons "demonstrate an almost Marcionite approach to the bulk of the Bible—the Old Testament."<sup>13</sup> Lack of attention to the Hebrew Bible is accompanied by inattention to questions of social justice, racism, and feminism, to which only 5% of sermons pay attention. Of sermons based on the New Testament, 62% draw on the gospels, 30% draw on Paul, and 8% on the rest of the New Testament. Sermons from the Hebrew Bible derive mainly from texts in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Psalms.<sup>14</sup> Commonly the Bible is proof-texted to confirm whatever proposition the preacher is advancing. These sermons seek to provide comfort, less to transform the life of the community. Sin is almost always personal, seldom social, dealt with abstractly, and grace "is treated in [only!] 25 percent of the sermons." When it is mentioned, 85% of the time it is left unexplained "as if full understanding is apparent."<sup>15</sup> What the laity hear of theology in these sermons is "a succession of snippets from the larger piece of cloth."<sup>16</sup> Twenty-five percent of the abundant illustrations were "frivolous and dealt with the wife's lasagna, the inevitable travelogues, house pets, overweight problems, fishing, and the like."<sup>17</sup>

### Disciplespeak

One's impressionistic awareness of the state of mind of Disciples pastors finds confirmation in Faulkner's social-scientific observations. The language Disciples use in discussions is revealing. There is a lot of talk about "feelings," as in the question: "Are you in touch with your feelings about that?" Feelings, apparently, are uninterpreted and have all the intellectual content of a hiccup. Often one hears the remark, "we have no beliefs," a comment that littered the floor of the 1993 General Assembly. Some Disciples have moved from "having no beliefs as tests of fellowship" to "having no beliefs," except that the belief that we have no beliefs is itself a belief, and a poor one. Other Disciples, a minority of social activists, talk less about feelings and more about "doing." Not long ago I was introduced to a Disciples pastor as a theologian, to which she responded: "I don't like theology; I care about what we do for the poor." An idea-less church finds it impossible to discuss issues or the meaning of the Christian faith. People share their feelings, dismiss ideas in favor of plans of action, and sometimes sink to ad hominem remarks against those who disagree with them. The other outstanding feature of contemporary "Disciplespeak" is the misuse of the term "inclusive." The word has a good meaning, when it is used to

say that “there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all” (Colossians 3:11)! But it is often used to say that we do not want to assert anything lest we exclude somebody. It would be oppressive to utter an authoritative (note: not an authoritarian) word. Any normative statement is suspect as exclusive and oppressive. Some Disciples may have become Foucault-style post-modernists without knowing it. Consider this one when biblical authority is being argued: “Is that in your Bible? It’s not in my Bible.” Rather than wrestle theologically with the Bible and its authority, the ratio of Bibles to persons is 1:1. Offending passages may be mentally removed from one’s own Bible, thus making it “my Bible.”

Let us refer to our ideal types of Disciples as the “feelers,” the “doers,” the “empty inclusivists” and the “prooftexters,” without implying that “feelers” do not care about doing or that “doers” have no feelings. And let us take it as clear that feelings are theory-laden and that deeds uninterpreted by words are as useless as words that are never enfolded in deeds. Examining the unconscious philosophical assumptions residing beneath the language of the feelers, doers and inclusivists might help us. These assumptions are found in modern and post-modern forms. We will look to certain philosophers to find them, but are not interested here in the adequacy of their views or their place in the history of discussion of these topics. Let us take them, instead, as expressions of the “common sense” of secularist culture, whether modern or post-modern.

### Secularist Assumptions

We begin with David Hume (1711-1776), the empiricist philosopher whose work profoundly influenced British and American philosophy in the tradition of empiricism and linguistic analysis. Hume argued that there are only two kinds of meaningful statements: empirical statements having to do with “matters of fact” and purely logical or mathematical statements having to do with “relations of ideas.” Religious and theological comments are out of bounds; indeed, they are not statements at all. At the conclusion of *The Natural History of Religion* he argued that if you examine the religious principles which have prevailed in the world “you will scarcely be persuaded that they are anything but sick men’s dreams.”<sup>18</sup> His *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* ended with this comment: “If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.”<sup>19</sup> The only meaningful statements, hence the only statements, are either empirical (“the wagon is red”) or analytical (“bachelors are unmarried” or “2 plus 2 equals 4”). Statements about God are “sophistry and illusion.”

Hume's 20th-century disciple, A. J. Ayer, provides the link between Hume's views and the claim of the feelers that what is important is not theological ideas but how you feel. Ayer agrees with Hume in dividing all genuine propositions into two classes: "those which, in his terminology, concern 'relations of ideas,' and those which concern 'matters of fact.'"<sup>20</sup> A proposition dealing with relations of ideas is termed "analytic," because its predicate does not add anything to the subject (that would be a "synthetic" proposition) but analyzes what is implied in it. Analytic propositions are definitions, identities, or records of the ways in which we customarily use symbols; they are unfalsifiable because they make no statements about matters of fact. An empirical proposition is one to which "some possible sense-experience should be relevant to the determination of its truth or falsehood."<sup>21</sup> Since "tautologies and empirical hypotheses form the entire class of significant propositions, we are justified in concluding that all metaphysical assertions are nonsensical."<sup>22</sup> Similarly, ethical concepts are "mere pseudo-concepts," because the "presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content."<sup>23</sup> The only meaning that can be attached to theological and ethical statements is "emotive." Emotive statements do not make assertions; they express feelings.<sup>24</sup> Consistently, Ayer argues that "if the assertion that there is a god is nonsensical, then the atheist's assertion that there is no god is equally nonsensical, since it is only a significant proposition that can be significantly contradicted."<sup>25</sup> Theists, atheists, agnostics, and ethicists can have no meaningful conversation with one another, since they make no meaningful statements. They can, however, share their feelings. We get from the assumptions motivating the "feelers" to an understanding of the "doers" with the help of R. B. Braithwaite, who agrees that neither ethical nor theological statements express genuine propositions. But he does not concede that such statements merely express feelings. He puts a conative theory in place of the emotive one. It insists that in making a theological or ethical statement the speaker "is subscribing to a policy of action."<sup>26</sup> Religious assertions are "primarily declarations of commitment to a way of life." He does not mean merely that religious statements include such a commitment, which would be an unexceptionable claim, but that their meaning is their use "in expressing the asserter's intention to follow a specified policy of behavior."<sup>27</sup> Hence the "primary use of religious assertions is to announce allegiance to a set of moral principles."<sup>28</sup> Unlike purely moral statements, religious statements intend to affect internal as well as external behavior and are accompanied by the telling of stories. The point of stories is not that they are true but that they enable people "to resolve upon and to carry through a course of action which is contrary to their natural inclinations."<sup>29</sup> We see the connection between Braithwaite and narrative theology where we are told that the question is not whether the story is true but whether we can muster the discipleship necessary to be truthful to the story.<sup>30</sup>

So there we have it: the assumption that feelings are the only things that matter or that the only important question is what we intend to do

depends on the prior assumption that statements about God (and all theological statements, whatever their immediate topic, are statements about God) are meaningless, not true or untrue, simply meaningless. The other characteristic conclusion, that we have nothing to assert and that our only obligation is to be “inclusive” follows readily from these. What these three tendencies add up to, to borrow a phrase from the sociologist Thomas Luckmann, is “secularization from within...the substitution of secular for religious contents within the mainline Christian churches.”<sup>31</sup> We might better term it “trivialization from within.” The feelers, doers, and vacuous inclusivists agree on the assumption that the constitutive claim of the Christian faith—that Jesus is the Christ—asserts nothing. If nothing contradicts it, as the inclusivists imply, that can only be so if the claim is empty.

### Conclusion

What is wrong with all this is that it is a way of talking about Christianity which cannot be appropriate to the gospel of Jesus Christ or intelligible or practically effective.<sup>32</sup> The good news, says Whitehead, “insists on its universality, because it is either that or a passing fancy. The conversion of the Gentiles is both the effect of truth and the test of truth.”<sup>33</sup> Christian faith can hardly make any sense if nothing is asserted. Nor can we expect people to be ultimately concerned about our “feelings” or plans of action that have no discernible connection with the constitutive claims of the Christian faith. Feelings, a laundry list of social causes, and a cognitively empty “inclusivism” fail to provide people with a sense of Christian identity. It all overlooks one overwhelming question: what is the church given and called to be and do, what is the “one thing necessary” that the church can do that no other institution can do? That one thing is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to make the Christian witness, to spread abroad in the world the love of God and the love of the neighbor.

Churches do many important things by way of good works—they provide counseling, run soup kitchens, care for the elderly, provide social contexts for newcomers to town—all important and not to be disparaged. We must care for “the least of these.”

Still, all these other activities could in principle carry on without churches... What a church uniquely can do is to preach the gospel—to make the soup kitchen a response to God’s grace after the model of Jesus’ ministry, to comfort the grieving and perplexed with the good news of God’s love, to proclaim a faith that grounds the love and hope that are in us. It may well be that everything else we do in our churches someone else could do better—but not this. If our churches are only doing things that someone else could do, then, sooner or later, even our own members will begin to ask if it’s really worth the trouble.<sup>34</sup>

The function of theology is to serve the church in its attempt to make the Christian witness. How it does this is to address precisely those issues that the feelers, the doers, the inclusivists and the proof-texters

would like to dodge: questions of ontology, ethics, and the use of the Bible.

Let me explain. Christian theology understands that revelation, which is always correlative with faith, creates an intelligent and intelligible community. Faith does not arise from experience in general. "It arises from what is special," argued Whitehead, "but it extends to what is general."<sup>35</sup> The beliefs of faith are so ordered as to be "coherent both in respect to the elucidation of thought, and in respect to the direction of conduct towards a unified purpose commanding ethical approval."<sup>36</sup> Notice: this special occasion serves both to make thought lucid and to clarify moral conduct. H. Richard Niebuhr accordingly defined revelation as "that special occasion [from which] we derive the concepts which make possible the elucidation of all the events in our history. Revelation means this intelligible event which makes all other events intelligible.... Revelation means the point at which we can begin to think and act as members of an intelligible and intelligent world of persons."<sup>37</sup>

The cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz agrees that any religion is a synthesis having two aspects to which he refers as "ethos" and "worldview." It is never merely one or the other or simply both because "the holy bears within it everywhere a sense of intrinsic obligation: It not only encourages devotion, it demands it; it not only induces intellectual assent, it enforces emotional commitment."<sup>38</sup> Nor is it merely ethics, because "the source of its emotional vitality is conceived to lie in the fidelity with which it expresses the fundamental nature of reality. The powerfully coercive 'ought' is felt to grow out of a comprehensive factual 'is,' and in such a way religion grounds the most specific requirements of human action in the most general contexts of human existence."<sup>39</sup>

The Christian faith has an ethical side that reflects our underlying attitude about ourselves, our neighbors and our world and an ontological side that embodies elements expressed in our understanding of God who is gracious love as the ultimate mystery in whom we live and move and have our being. Christians are people who can understand themselves in any ultimate sense in terms of and only in terms of the love of God freely offered to us in and through Jesus Christ and who know in turn that we must love God with all our selves and our neighbors as ourselves. Our neighbors are defined, all of them, as those whom God has given us to love. If we cannot talk meaningfully about ontology and ethics, we cannot make meaningful assertions of or a credible witness to the Christian faith. Theology helps us to make that witness, as long as those ordained to make that witness take the doing of theology seriously.

Theology, which Barth called the conscience of preaching, also helps us deal with the Bible. "Conscienceless preachers," contends William Placher, "facing a particular issue, are apt to seize on a biblical passage that supports their own point of view, quote it, and presume that that ends the matter. But there is usually some other biblical passage that challenges the easy fundamentalisms of the right or the left."<sup>40</sup> Wres-

ting with the Bible and trying to make sense of it is no easy task. It is the difficult occupation of theology. To regard the Bible as authoritative is to wrestle theologically with its whole range of witness; it is not simply to say "I'm a liberal/conservative and I've found a verse I like."

If we make a vigorous and exciting witness to the Christian faith, articulate the love of God made known to us in Jesus Christ, grapple seriously with the biblical witness, and help people to understand who God is, who they are, who their neighbors are and what they are given and called to do in the contexts in which they live, we will leave an important legacy to our children and grandchildren. We will also, probably, survive. But whether or not we survive, our task is to bear a faithful witness to Jesus Christ.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>See Paul Tillich, *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch* (New York: Scribners, 1966).

<sup>2</sup>See the discussion in William Placher, *Unapologetic Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), pp. 24-38.

<sup>3</sup>Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1978), p. 15. on symbolic reference and the role of interpretation and imagination in ordinary experience, see *ibid.*, pp. 168-183.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Neville, *The Highroad Around Modernism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. xi.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup>I do not wish to leave the impression that I regard the discussion of the task and method of theology that goes on among the post-liberals and post-modernists as unimportant. In my *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), I argued my preference for a conversational or moderate post-modern to a narrative or post-liberal approach to theology (chapter 1). Richard Lints helpfully characterizes some of the differences between these two approaches to theological method in his "The Postpositivist Choice: Tracy or Lindbeck?" in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LXI/4 (Winter 1993), pp. 655-678. Stephen L. Sell argues that both post-modernist and post-liberal theologians bifurcate tradition from experience and, hence, need to be transcended: "Hermeneutics in Theology and the Theology of Hermeneutics," *ibid.*, pp. 679-704.

<sup>7</sup>Franklin I. Gamwell, *The Divine Good* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>David Griffin, *God & Religion in the Postmodern World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. x. Griffin's "constructive postmodernism" is a different species from that discussed here. It is a significant proposal, but I obviously do not think that he should call it "postmodernism."

<sup>10</sup>Michael Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, tr. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 131.

<sup>11</sup>Nancy Fraser, "Michel Foucault: A 'Young Conservative'?" *Ethics*, 96 (1985), p. 172.

<sup>12</sup>See James O. Duke, "Scholarship in the Disciples Tradition," *The Disciples Theological Digest* (1986), Vol. 1, pp. 5-40; James O. Duke with Joseph D. Driskill, "Disciples Theologizing amid Currents of Mainstream Protestant Thought, 1940-1980: Some Sketchbook Observations," in *A Case Study of Mainstream Protestantism: The Disciples' Relation to American Culture, 1880-1989*, ed. D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pp. 139-164; and Clark M. Williamson and Charles R.

Blaisdell, "Disciples Contributions and Responses to Mainstream Protestant Theology, 1880-1953), in *ibid.*, pp. 107-138. These footnotes are to articles dealing with "theology" in the narrow sense of the term; many other articles in the same volume deal with biblical and historical theology and should also be consulted. Also important in this regard is *Disciples of Christ in the 21st Century*, ed., Michael Kinnamon (St. Louis: CBP Press, 1988).

<sup>13</sup>Joseph E. Faulkner, "What Are They Saying?," in D. Newell Williams, ed., *A Case Study of Mainstream Protestantism*, p. 438.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 427.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 436.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 428.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 433.

<sup>18</sup>David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 75.

<sup>19</sup>David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957; second edition 1902), p. 165.

<sup>20</sup>A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), p. 31.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>26</sup>R. B. Braithwaite, *An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955) anthologized in John Hick, ed., *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 395.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 398.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>30</sup>See Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 37.

<sup>31</sup>Quoted in Peter L. Berger, "American Religion: Conservative Upsurge, Liberal Prospects," in *Liberal Protestantism: Realities and Possibilities*, ed., Robert S. Michaelsen and Wade Clark Roof (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1986), p. 24.

<sup>32</sup>See the insightful comments on the impact of analytic philosophy on Christian theology by Antony Flew in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1955), pp. 106-108.

<sup>33</sup>Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Living Age Books, 1960), p. 133.

<sup>34</sup>William C. Placher, "Why bother with theology?," *Christian Century* (Feb. 2-9, 1994), p. 104.

<sup>35</sup>Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), p. 31.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>37</sup>H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941), pp. 93-94.

<sup>38</sup>Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 126.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>Placher, "Why bother with theology?," p. 104.

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## Thayer Christian Church Named Fund

The Thayer congregation was organized August 15, 1887 by A. S. Wright with four members. The first location of the church was two miles from Mammoth Springs, Missouri. E. E. Davidson preached for this congregation in 1905. The church continued to minister in a meaningful way until July 13, 1993 when it closed its doors for the last time. This Named Fund was established by gifts from its members.

**The “Unacceptable Face” of Disciples History:  
The Mass Suicides at Jonestown, Guyana**  
by Karen Leigh Stroup\*

Introduction

It has been some 16 years since over 900 church members committed mass suicide at the direction of Rev. Jim Jones in Jonestown, Guyana. When the suicides first occurred, the media contacted the national office of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for comment; in 1993, *The Disciple* ran a cover story on the mass suicides. But in between these times, Disciples have been reluctant to claim as their own Jim Jones, who was an ordained minister of the denomination, or Peoples Temple,<sup>1</sup> which was a congregation in good standing in the Disciples.

Despite this understandable reluctance to claim the suicides of Jonestown—a reluctance shared by all of mainline Christianity in the United States—it is important to try to understand why the “white night” occurred. John Kent suggests that religious violence (his example is that surrounding the reformation and counter-reformation) must receive attention from church historians, that “if religion is to serve, rather than to seduce mankind, we need to examine its historical record, its unacceptable face, much more critically than has been done by either the ecclesiastical or the social historian.”<sup>2</sup>

Much of the literature that has been written on Jonestown is focused on what may be the quintessential historical question: Why? Why did this happen? When the event is so recent and the outcome so distressing, the why question has more power than it would otherwise. Writers on Jonestown sometimes ask this question explicitly, sometimes implicitly, but all those analyzed here do ask the question. Each writer is realistic enough to understand that there is no single determining cause for the suicides; numerous factors were involved. But the Jonestown suicides were a striking event partly because of their rarity. While there are historical precedents, such things do not happen very often, even when the factors involved in Jonestown are present in other groups. The question then becomes which factor made the critical difference. Which was the factor that, at base, was the cause of the suicides?

The authors examined here offer different—quite disparate—answers to this question. We will first examine the case put forward by each, and then engage them in conversation with each other. The studies of Jonestown are studied chronologically, because there has been a movement in the historical conversation, which we will discuss later.

The Critical Factors  
The Factor of Idolatry

The only church historian to have considered Jonestown from a scholarly perspective and at any length wrote soon after the suicides. In 1979, Henry Bowden approached the issue from a church history and a

faith perspective. He notes that sects have always been a part of Christian history, and that if

[j]udged by orthodox standards at any given time, sects have almost always seemed bent on destruction because they espoused an erroneous faith or sacrificed practical caution in pursuit of one-sided conceptions of religious truth.<sup>3</sup>

Bowden lists as examples the Pilgrims, Quakers, Seventh-Day Dunkers, Elizabeth Ann Seton, Brigham Young, Father Divine, and the Nation of Islam, pointing out that at the time these movements or leaders arose, it was impossible to measure whether they would in the end be forces for good or ill in the faith. Even those communities which eventually came to be accepted had in common with the non-accepted ones—and with Peoples Temple—the qualities of being different; alienation from the larger church; self-righteousness; and lack of self-critical ability. The final difference between “good” and “bad” sects, and the factor that led to the disastrous end of Peoples Temple, is full-blown idolatry.

Human adulation has often made too much of an institution, a creed, a leader, and even the Bible; this tendency to apotheosize creates more golden calves, obstacles between ourselves and the one God we are to serve. To permit an intermediary to stand between believers and God for any reason is a travesty of our Judaeo-Christian heritage no matter how exalted, compelling, awesome or powerful that secondary image might be. How much more tragic is Jonestown—this current instance of idolatry.... If Jonestown teaches us anything, it is that we must cleave unsparingly to the worship of God alone and beware of false gods which stand in the way.<sup>4</sup>

For Bowden, then, Jonestown is not a unique event, but only a particularly extreme and horrifying example of a tendency that shows itself time and again in the history of the church: idolatry. Had the members of Peoples Temple not made an idol of Jim Jones to the extent they did, the suicides would not have occurred.

### The Factor of the Irresponsible Denomination

Another analysis from an overtly Christian perspective was also published in 1979. Steve Rose is an independent scholar with no academic affiliation, and while he wrote a popular history, later scholarly writers have found his account good enough to cite.<sup>5</sup> Like Bowden, Rose is open about his faith perspective.

Fully half of Rose’s book is taken up with primary material, including news articles, interviews, tape transcripts, memoranda, and letters. Much of this material is related to the denominational administrative bodies of the Disciples and its handling of Peoples Temple before and after the suicides. While Rose takes account of many factors that precipitated the white night, in his view it was the denomination’s unwillingness to police the congregation that led to the suicides. “The minister’s name was James Warren Jones. The church was called People’s Temple. He was a Disciples of Christ minister.”<sup>6</sup> With these facts Rose begins his account.

In the book's opening pages, Rose details "early warnings" that something was amiss at Peoples Temple.<sup>7</sup> But time and again Disciples national leaders ignored the allegations or came to Jones' defense. When controversial columnist Lester Kinsolving wrote about Peoples Temple in 1973, General Minister and President (GMP) A. Dale Fiers wrote to both inquirers and denominational officials dismissing the charges.<sup>8</sup> Much the same response came when, in 1979, the *Indianapolis Star* published a story titled "Ex-Disciple Calls Cult 'Nightmare.'"<sup>9</sup> And finally, after the suicides occurred, the new GMP wrote a press release saying that because of these events, the denomination would "consider a procedure for disavowing a congregation."<sup>10</sup> Four months later, though, the GMP said that after extensive discussions he was asking the denomination's general board to "tak[e] no action that would involve passing judgment on a congregation's ministry."<sup>11</sup> Individuals and congregations will always, according to Rose, get involved in bad situations like that of Peoples Temple. It is the responsibility of the larger church—in this case the denominational hierarchy—to make certain that such things do not lead to mass suicide or other theologically inappropriate actions. For Rose, the critical factor in causing the mass suicides of Jonestown was the Disciples of Christ's unwillingness to take such a role.

#### The Factor of the Failure of the Black Church

Although Jim Jones and all of the congregational leaders of Peoples Temple were white, "approximately seventy percent of those who perished in Jonestown were Black, the majority were women, many were poor and elderly, and many were from mainline Black churches."<sup>12</sup> Smith, writing in 1982, rightly notes that not only have few analyses of Jonestown taken account of this fact, but it is also true that "responses from Black Church leaders and Black scholars were conspicuously absent."<sup>13</sup> His purpose is to ask about Jonestown from a black perspective.

Smith rejects two explanations of the suicides, which he calls the "Psychoanalytically Oriented Worldview Explanation"<sup>14</sup> and the "Only in California Explanation."<sup>15</sup> While these explanations have not been evident in the material we have examined so far, they were the most common offered in the popular media soon after the suicides. Smith suggests another explanation: Jonestown occurred because the black church did not offer its members important things they were able to find in Peoples Temple.

Many Black people originally responded positively to Peoples' Temple because it was a movement that provided psychic support and linked it with a program of social/communal outreach. Hence, Black peoples' involvement in the Peoples' Temple movement can be seen as an attempt to make Black religion relevant to their social, political and economic condition. By breaking with the insularity and seemingly irrelevant style of traditional Black church worship, many thought they had found in the Peoples' Temple a form of church involvement

that spoke more directly to the issues of spiritual uplift, justice, social change and communal empowerment.<sup>16</sup>

According to Smith, California's black church of the Peoples Temple period focused on individual salvation and noninvolvement. He notes that "Even Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was virtually snubbed by many San Francisco Bay Area Black churches when he visited during the 1960's."<sup>17</sup> Peoples Temple responded to the real needs of the black community and through black membership, created a congregation of such a size and financial base that the insularity which allowed the suicides to occur was possible. For Smith, then, the critical factor was the failure of the black church.

### The Factor of Cults

The United States was deeply concerned about cults in the decade of the 1970s. A network of anti-cult groups arose, as did an interpretive paradigm that is a subset of the psychological perspective. Levi's investigation of Jonestown, published in 1982, is typical of these interpretations. He notes the many cults<sup>18</sup> existing as he writes, and suggests that Peoples Temple, as a cult, shared with all cults certain qualities: they arise in times of social change;<sup>19</sup> attract rootless people;<sup>20</sup> have total control over members;<sup>21</sup> claim there is a single version of the truth; demand complete loyalty to the leader;<sup>22</sup> isolate members;<sup>23</sup> believe in an afterlife; advocate hostility to outsiders;<sup>24</sup> and sometimes advocate murder and suicide.<sup>25</sup> Levi holds that because Jonestown had all the makings of a cult, and because "the connection between religion and violence is well known,"<sup>26</sup> the mass suicides were inevitable.

### The Factor of Jim Jones' Psychopathology

Tim Reiterman was one of the journalists who accompanied Congressman Leo Ryan on the trip that precipitated the Jonestown suicides. Reiterman had been covering Peoples Temple for a year and a half when he was injured in the airport ambush, and did three years of research after the suicides. His book is not an "instant" potboiler, and he also claims it is not journalism but history. Whatever one may think about a journalist's ability to write history, many academic scholars cite *Raven* and regard it as the "the best historical treatment to date of Jones and the People's Temple."<sup>27</sup>

Reiterman's methodology is a psychohistorical one. He does not name it as such, but throughout the book he builds a case for Jim Jones' mental illness. He notes that Jones' mother was ambivalent about childbearing;<sup>28</sup> that the child was left alone on a regular basis for extended periods of time;<sup>29</sup> that he was rejected at school and abused animals during those years;<sup>30</sup> that he often faked collapses as a means of manipulation;<sup>31</sup> and that he claimed to be God.<sup>32</sup> At one point Jones submitted to a psychiatric examination and was diagnosed as "paranoid with delusions of grandeur."<sup>33</sup>

That this factor was the critical one in the mass suicides is argued by Reiterman's conclusion:

But despite any culpability of government bureaucrats, investigators or politicians, blame for the Jonestown tragedy must ultimately come to rest in the deranged person of Jim Jones. His ends-justify-the-means philosophy, paranoia, megalomania and charismatic personality must weigh much more heavily in the balance than any oversight, inaptitude, weakness or political exploitation by those outside the church. It was not the Temple's enemies that brought down the Temple, but Jones's destructive personality. The prophecy of doom had become an end in itself.<sup>34</sup>

The psychological explanation for the Jonestown suicides has been the accepted one in popular culture.<sup>35</sup> Reiterman's book is a careful support of that factor as the one that caused the white night.

### The Factor of Modern American Culture

John Hall, writing in 1987, identifies his investigation as "a project in the historical sociology of culture."<sup>36</sup> Using sociological theory, he suggests that the Jonestown suicides happened because Jones "caricatured and sometimes intensified sinister tendencies in modern society."<sup>37</sup> Some of these tendencies are the fact that Jones found his way into a religious denomination of the typical liberal establishment that would not keep track of him;<sup>38</sup> a rationale for collective suicide was and still is available;<sup>39</sup> the group used methods of social control and communalism that could still be used;<sup>40</sup> the congregation was a political force and grew increasingly sophisticated in modern public relations techniques.<sup>41</sup> Hall notes that

the most ironic testament to the compelling attraction of Jones's techniques in the arenas of communal economics, politics, and public relations is that his own opponents the Concerned Relatives and the Human Freedom Center used similar tactics.<sup>42</sup>

In an even greater irony, Hall maintains that the Concerned Relatives—the group that pushed for Ryan's investigatory visit that precipitated the airport murders and then the suicides had more culpability than anyone has been willing to assign them. This is the case because they did, indeed, use the same tactics that Jones used, tactics the greater American society uses and affirms. For Hall, Jonestown was only an instance of what can happen given the realities of American life.

### The Factor of Theology

David Chidester noted in 1988 that no study of Jonestown had analyzed the suicides from a theological point of view. By this he means not putting one's own theological framework over the event and then interpreting it, as did Bowden and Rose, but looking at the theology of Jones and Peoples Temple members. He suggests the reason for this lack is that it was important for all Americans to distance themselves from the group after the suicides. Chidester shows clearly that local and

national governments, mainline religious bodies, and popular culture all interpreted Temple members as so “other” that the entire country was then able to pretend similar suicides could never happen among “normal” people.

Using a history of religions/anthropological perspective, Chidester analyzes Temple theology through what he calls basic religious paradigms of 1) classifying persons, 2) orientation in time, 3) orientation in space, and 4) the concept of religious suicide. By imposing this template of “structured empathy”<sup>43</sup> on published reports, primary sources, and extensive citations from tape recordings made of Jones’ sermons and interviews, Chidester finds a coherent, largely consistent theological system operating in the life of Peoples Temple.

Elements of Temple theology included the assertion that racial and ethnic minorities, women, and the elderly had always been oppressed in the United States; belief that the primary task of the church was to work simultaneously to end this oppression in the larger society by creating a “heaven on earth,” and in the meantime offering a non-oppressive environment within the church; concern with an impending nuclear apocalypse; extensive use of the Biblical exodus to shape the community’s story; a near obsession with the redemptive possibilities within socialism; a de-emphasis on the abilities of God (in this case, Jones) to change people’s oppression, with an emphasis on their own power and need to work for change. Added to this was a theological rationale for group suicide as martyrdom and sacrificial death. When Peoples Temple was threatened from without by bad press, the loss of members, and a congressional investigation, the suicides were inevitable. It was theology—in this case, a bad theology—that was the factor that caused the suicides.

### The Factor of the Dream

Barbara J. W. Hargrove is a professor of Sociology of Religion, and in 1989 used sociological theory to look at Peoples Temple. She is concerned that the “scientific study of religion” had not been widely used to understand the mass suicides. She notes that such a method shows the Temple had in common with other groups at least three characteristics. The first of these is the “DNB Thesis”<sup>44</sup> which explains the rise of new religious movements. First, so the theory says, groups like Peoples Temple recruit people who have suffered some sort of disintegration or deprivation: economic, social, organismic, ethical, or psychic.<sup>45</sup> This was the aspect most at play in the case of Peoples Temple. The second part of the DNB Thesis refers to the neediness of converts, and the third to belongingness, particularly in communal lifestyles.<sup>46</sup> Two other factors are common to new religious groups and Peoples Temple: a charismatic leader and the belief that the group is the target of a government conspiracy.<sup>47</sup>

Many groups have these factors in common. What was unique about Peoples Temple, says Hargrove, was the “movement in its endeavor to overcome in its membership many of the patterns of racial and class distinction that are endemic in American society.”<sup>48</sup> The particular path

the Temple followed to meet this goal was one of choosing Jones as its charismatic leader, forging a belief system out of Christianity and socialism, modifying its belief system for public consumption, and escaping to Guyana when threatened by the government. This was the path Peoples Temple chose to pursue its dream, and the path itself determined the suicides.

### Analysis

Each of the authors examined here offers a different interpretive framework for understanding the Jonestown suicides. It should not be a surprise that Bowden, the church historian, finds a Christian theological reason for them; Rose, the self-proclaimed Christian, a church-related reason; Smith, an African American, a reason related to the failure of the black church; Levi, the cult scholar, the cult paradigm; Reiterman, the psychologically-minded journalist, a psychological reason; Hall, the "historical sociologist of culture," a cultural sociological reason; Chidester, the history of religions scholar/anthropologist, a reason inherent in the group's theology; and Hargrove, the sociologist of religion, both sociological and religious reasons. What this says is that method affects conclusions. This is neither new nor surprising.

But these authors offer very different answers to the central question: Which particular factor in the life of Peoples Temple caused the suicides? If we say that all the authors are to some extent right, we end up at the position at which they all begin and find inadequate: there were many factors which, taken together, caused the suicides. The task now becomes evaluating each of the proposals.

Several authors propose determining factors that are unconvincing because they exist in so many groups in which mass suicide does not occur. Bowden speaks from traditional Christianity, and if one takes that perspective, it seems self-evident that the members of Peoples Temple were guilty of the sin of idolizing Jim Jones. Doubtless this was a factor in what eventually happened. Yet while idolatry is among the most common of sins, it is not every day that congregations follow their ministers in taking their own lives. Were the critical factor in the Jonestown suicides one of idolatry, then white nights would occur in churches all the time. Idolatry is not a sufficient cause for the Jonestown suicides.

Neither is the lack of denominational supervision a sufficient cause. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and other churches with congregational polities maintain a consistent hands-off policy towards the individual congregations affiliated with them. Were this sufficient cause for the Jonestown suicides, then, again, such things would happen all the time. The same problem is found in the cult explanation. There are (and always have been) cults abounding, but only in a small percentage of them is there any kind of violence, much less the suicide of the entire group.

Hall's hypothesis is in this category, as well. Jonestown may well have typified negative tendencies and trends in American society, but

such a fact—even if it is true—does not explain the suicides. Again, if it did, then group suicides in this country would be a common occurrence. Finally, although Reiterman makes a convincing case that Jim Jones was clinically insane, this in itself does not explain the suicides. It is quite common for people with serious mental illnesses to have religious content to their psychopathology. If a crazy minister were the determining factor, then why do we not see many congregations, like Peoples Temple, led into suicide by a madman?

The difficulty with Smith's theory is more subtle but present all the same. Smith suggests that the Jonestown suicides occurred because the black churches of the San Francisco area did not provide the kind of religious life satisfying to area blacks. How then to explain the twenty percent of the congregation that was white? Smith might argue that there were other factors important for other racial groups, but that his concern is rightly for the majority group that largely had been ignored until his article. Yet there is still a problem here. Smith's theory offers a convincing explanation for blacks being attracted to a church that was run by whites, but it does not, in itself, explain the suicides. It is possible to imagine an integrated congregation with an emphasis on social justice issues that did not commit mass suicide. In fact, though such congregations may be relatively rare, they do exist, and suicide has not happened in any of them.

In addition to looking at these treatments individually, examining them as a group suggests an interesting possibility. It is striking that there is a gap of time between the early treatments of Jonestown and the later ones. Thomas Robbins suggests that there was a "first wave" of scholarship on Jonestown, which lasted through about 1982, and a later "second wave."<sup>49</sup> While Robbins is concerned only with sociological studies, his demarcation has further uses. The first wave of studies considered here includes Bowden, Rose, Smith, Levi, and Reiterman. Then, almost ten years after the suicides, came Hall, Chidester, and Hargrove.

The analyses in the first wave—and the literature examined here reflects what is generally available—is of a different tenor than that in the second. Three perspectives dominate the first wave: the theological, the psychological, and the cult, which is a subset of the psychological. Each of these perspectives suggests that the critical factor which caused the suicides was something that set the members of Peoples Temple apart from mainstream America. This is more of the distancing that Chidester noted in the first reactions to Jonestown. It was important for individuals and institutions to say, in effect, "That couldn't have happened to me," and these treatments of the first wave support such a belief.

While most people fall into idolatry at one time or another, Bowden's readers could easily say, "I would never idolize someone to that extent." The vast majority of Rose's readers, who live within a hierarchical church polity, could say, "That would never happen to me because the synod or bishop would prevent it." Those who read Smith, especially

blacks, could say, "That could never happen to me because my church has not failed that badly and I would never attend a white-run church." And Reiterman's readers could say, "I could never get involved in such a thing because I know to stay away from crazy people." Each of these approaches imposes an otherness on the members of Peoples Temple, and this otherness soothes the fear that such things might happen again.

Second wave examinations of Jonestown take a very different view. Hall suggests the suicides occurred because of the group's similarities to the wider American culture. Chidester concentrates on the Temple's theology, and Hargrove the way in which that theology was put into practice. Every American who is affiliated with a church has some sort of theology and participates in some path designed to realize the theology's goals. The otherness that separates a safe life from one that ends in mass suicides disappears. There are now many connections between the members of Peoples Temple and the horrified Americans who survived them.

Hall's treatment has the advantage of emphasizing the similarity between Jonestown and the wider American culture, but, as we have seen, in his view there is nothing unique about Peoples Temple that would have led to the suicides. We are left, then, with Chidester and Hargrove. Again, as we have seen, almost every church-related American has a theology and a path to make that theology's goals a reality. The why question then becomes a what question: What was it about the theology and/or path of Peoples Temple that led its members to mass suicide?

Hargrove believes that each aspect of Peoples Temple's path contributed to the mass suicides. Therefore, to avoid a similar occurrence, it would be unwise for a church to 1) choose an insane minister; 2) modify its belief system for public consumption; 3) leave its home country for a foreign land; and 4) combine Christianity and socialism. The first two points go without saying; as Bowden noted, though, other groups—the Puritans among them—have migrated to a new country with good long-term results. The crux of the matter then becomes the wisdom of combining Christianity and socialism.

This leads us to Chidester and his contention that it was the particular theology of Peoples Temple that led to its tragic end. Most people would say that a theology which leads to mass suicide is a bad theology, and there is no doubt that the Temple's theology was not orthodox Christian theology. But a consistent, coherent theology was present, one that encompassed aspects which have been present in at least some strands of Christianity: apocalypticism, emphasis on the themes of exodus and promised land, working to establish the kingdom in this world, holding property in common, and charismatic healing. Added to this were a heavy dose of socialism and Jones' own ideas. The individual parts of this theology were tightly interwoven, so it is difficult to separate one or two from the whole and say that this or that was the one theological factor which led to the suicides. Even the unusual belief

that Jones was God is not unprecedented in American religious groups; the Shakers held that Ann Lee was the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity and there were no mass suicides among the Shakers. More study of the Temple's theology is needed: more scholars should examine the recordings of Jones' sermons and provide additional interpretations of this primary material; the theology should be examined to see which aspects or combination of aspects led to the suicides. But on the whole, Chidester's proposal for the cause of the suicides is convincing. His explanation allows the members of Peoples Temple to be not strange and "other," but human; it takes seriously the members' own contention that their motivation through the end was primarily religious; and it offers a vision of the Temple's uniqueness that could both explain the suicides and offer a reason that such events do not take place more often.

### Conclusion

The suicides at Jonestown involved two aspects of church life widely studied by church historians: theology and polity. Both also have an important place in the Disciples, who emphasize congregational autonomy and an anti-creedal stance; both were certainly factors in allowing the Temple to develop to such an extent that the suicides were possible. An identical congregation in the Catholic or Methodist traditions would have been subject to investigation, discipline, and—one would hope—reconciliation with an orthodox theology that does not make mass suicide so logically consistent. Chidester misses this important factor, probably because he is not a church historian.

This suggests that contrary to the minimal attention Jonestown has received from the Disciples, it should become an important topic for study. At the very least, the issues of polity, theology, and the suicides should be examined in Disciples history courses at the congregational, college, and seminary levels, and be the subject of study for Disciples church historians. Because they are also anti-creedal and congregationally-governed, historians in the Churches of Christ and the Independent Christian Churches should also take full account of Jonestown. As unsettling as the mass suicides remain, they became possible because of the way all three movements have structured church life. It is time we examined the unacceptable face of our history.

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<sup>1</sup>This form of the name "Peoples Temple" is used because the Temple itself used it. Others have used different forms of the name, though, and those usages are preserved here in quotations.

<sup>2</sup>John Kent, *The Unacceptable Face: The Modern Church in the Eyes of the Historian*. (London: SCM Press, 1987), 12.

<sup>3</sup>Henry Bowden, "Jonestown: The Enduring Questions," *Theology Today* 36 (1979): 66.

<sup>4</sup>Bowden, 73-4.

<sup>5</sup>Chidester (see below) is a notable example.

<sup>6</sup>Steve Rose, *Jesus and Jim Jones* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979), 13.

<sup>7</sup>Rose, see especially 35-50.

<sup>8</sup>Rose, 123-5.

<sup>9</sup>Rose, 153-8.

<sup>10</sup>Jones, 176-9.

<sup>11</sup>Rose, 212.

<sup>12</sup>Archie Smith, Jr., "An Interpretation of the Peoples' Temple and Jonestown: Implications for the Black Church," *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 10 (1982), 1.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>Smith, 3.

<sup>15</sup>Smith, 4.

<sup>16</sup>Smith, 6.

<sup>17</sup>Smith, 5.

<sup>18</sup>Ken Levi, "Jonestown and Religious Commitment in the 1970s" in *Violence and Religious Commitment: Implications of Jim Jones' People's Temple Movement* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982). Levi uses the word "sect" to talk about cults. For his reasons, see p. 6.

<sup>19</sup>Levi, 7.

<sup>20</sup>Levi, 8.

<sup>21</sup>Levi, 10.

<sup>22</sup>Levi, 11.

<sup>23</sup>Levi, 13.

<sup>24</sup>Levi, 6.

<sup>25</sup>Levi, 18.

<sup>26</sup>Levi, 3.

<sup>27</sup>Jerry Kroth, "Recapitulating Jonestown," *Journal of Psychohistory* 11 (1984): 388. *Raven* is cited by Chidester, Hall, and other scholars not cited in this article.

<sup>28</sup>Tim Reiterman with John Jacobs, *Raven: The Untold Story of The Rev. Jim Jones and His People* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1982), 9-10.

<sup>29</sup>Reiterman, 12-13.

<sup>30</sup>Reiterman, 15-16.

<sup>31</sup>Reiterman, 74-5 and 24-1 are only two of numerous examples.

<sup>32</sup>Reiterman, 93, 148-9.

<sup>33</sup>Reiterman, 262.

<sup>34</sup>Reiterman, 577.

<sup>35</sup>Gillian Lindt, "Journeys to Jonestown: Accounts and Interpretations of the Rise and Demise of the Peoples' Temple," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 37 (1981-2): 161.

<sup>36</sup>John R. Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land; Jonestown in American Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987), 313.

<sup>37</sup>Hall, 310.

<sup>38</sup>Hall, 53.

<sup>39</sup>Hall, 134, 136.

<sup>40</sup>Hall, 110-125.

<sup>41</sup>Hall, 151-171.

<sup>42</sup>Hall, 310.

<sup>43</sup>David Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: An Interpretation of Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), xiv.

<sup>44</sup>DNB stands for Disintegration, Neediness, and Belongingness. Hargrove takes this concept from R. E. Gussner and S. D. Berkowitz, "Scholars, Sects, and Senghas I: Recruitment to Asian-Based Meditation Groups in North America." *Sociological Analysis* 49 (1988): 136-70.

<sup>45</sup>Barbara J. W. Hargrove, "Jonestown and the Scientific Study of Religion," in *New Religious Movements, Mass Suicide, and Peoples Temple: Scholarly Perspectives on a Tragedy*, ed. Rebecca Moore and Fielding McGehee, III. Vol. 37 of Studies in American Religion Series (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Melien Press, 1989), 25-6.

<sup>46</sup>Hargrove, 25.

<sup>47</sup>Hargrove, 30, 33f.

<sup>48</sup>Hargrove, 37.

<sup>49</sup>Thomas Robbins, "Reconsidering Jonestown," *Religious Studies Review* 15 (1989):

## **“A Little Man with a Great Brain”: The Story of George A. Klingman**

by Jim Mankin\*

George A. Klingman was one of the most gifted men in Churches of Christ in the early part of the 20th century. He was an active churchman, college professor and administrator, and writer. Before we forget, it is important to our restoration heritage to tell his story.

George A. Klingman was born September 3, 1865 in New Albany, Indiana of pious German Lutheran parents. Later the family moved to Louisville, Kentucky. At an early age, he showed his gift of speaking. While taking night classes at the Madison Street School, he studied debate under Mrs. Kate Harrington. George was to take the affirmative of one debate that the school board was invited to attend. The night of the debate the hall was packed, and George got up and delivered his speech extemporaneously without flaw. When he finished, the president of the school board grabbed his hand, gave him a hug and declared, “George that was the greatest oration I have ever heard in my life. Some day you will be a great preacher.”<sup>1</sup> His mother had also prayed that George would some day become a preacher.<sup>2</sup>

On his 21st birthday he entered Kentucky University and the College of the Bible. Here he took the English course, and studied under J. W. McGarvey and I. B. Grubbs.<sup>3</sup> While here he met Lula Mae Grubbs, and they were married on September 10, 1891. They had ten children, one of whom died in infancy. In 1894 Klingman received the A.B. degree from Transylvania University and, according to his transcript, the only “B” he made was in first semester Greek. He graduated as valedictorian and made his commencement speech on the theme “I Am Debtor.”<sup>4</sup>

George stayed in Lexington to take the classical course at the College of the Bible and graduated with his A.M. from Transylvania in 1897. He graduated in the Hebrew course from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville in 1901. This shows his lifelong love of language. During this same period (1894-1902) he served as the minister for the Portland Avenue Church of Christ in Louisville, where he had been baptized as a teenager.<sup>5</sup>

In 1904 he was called to be the minister of the Plum Street Church of Christ in Detroit. While there he offered free instruction in Bible, English, Greek and Hebrew at the church building or by correspondence, an idea ahead of its time.<sup>6</sup> While at Plum Street he was invited by A. B. Barrett to give a two-week lecture series on church history at Childers Classical Institute, the forerunner of Abilene Christian College, in January 1907. Klingman did such an outstanding job that he was invited to be Dean of the new college in West Texas for the 1907-1908 school year. His brother William also joined the faculty that year. In addition to his administrative work, Klingman taught Sacred Literature, Sacred History, Philosophy and German.<sup>7</sup> In the summer he

preached in a revival meeting at near-by Clyde, Texas and had 42 baptisms.<sup>8</sup>

After that year in Abilene, Klingman left with Barret and Charles Roberson to establish Southland University in Denton, Texas, the predecessor to Southwestern Christian College. Following the 1908-09 sessions the schools closed, and Klingman returned to Detroit and the Plum Street pulpit. While serving the congregation this time, he wrote and published *Church History for Busy People*. Among the contents were chapters on Doctrines and Sects, Creeds and Confessions of Faith, Reform and Reformers, Mysticism and Fanaticism, Persecution and Inquisitions. Interestingly, he listed all of the popes and the church councils in a miscellaneous section.<sup>9</sup> In 1911 he received the Doctor of Philosophy degree from Carnegie University, Inc. of Dover, Delaware. This was a correspondence school, and unfortunately this school closed in 1914 for failure to pay taxes.<sup>10</sup>

Another work that Klingman engaged in while in Detroit was taking his family to the jail to sing for the prisoners. Music was one of his loves, and Klingman knew both the music and words of most hymns and spiritual songs so that he rarely had to use a song book.<sup>11</sup> He taught all his children to sing parts, and they used many family hours in singing.<sup>12</sup>

In 1912, Klingman was asked to be the president of Potter Bible College in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Through the efforts of James A. Harding, Potter Bible College began operating in the fall of 1901 on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Potter. The Potters believed they could support the college from the proceeds of the farm. Charles Christopher Klingman, a younger brother of George, along with C. G. Vincent, later his brother-in-law, were the first to enroll in the new college. C. C. had been baptized by his brother in 1897 at the Campbell Street congregation in Louisville, and was among the first people to do mission work in Japan from 1908-1913.<sup>13</sup> Harding managed to keep the school going by the personal loyalty the faculty and brotherhood had for him. Even though Klingman employed eight teachers and enlarged the curriculum, the school attracted only 70 students, down from over 100 the year before. He made a serious attempt to put all the teachers on a regular salary, but by Christmas it was evident that he could not meet these obligations. Potter Bible College closed in 1913, after Klingman's one-year presidency.<sup>14</sup>

Klingman then returned to Detroit, this time to work with the Cameron Avenue Church of Christ.

Abilene Christian College was beginning to flourish under the presidency of Jesse P. Sewell. In 1917 he invited Klingman to return as dean of the Bible Department, named the Mrs. A. M. Thornton Bible School, for the benefactor who gave \$500 to the college for teaching the Bible. He accepted this new role with characteristic vigor. He also served as the minister of the College Church of Christ that met in the campus auditorium with a seating capacity of 700 people. The catalogue for 1918 stated, "Our four year Classical Course represents the same amount of work required in the best 'Seminary' for the degree of Th.M."<sup>15</sup>

The school was divided into the departments of sacred history, sacred literature, religious history and missions, and Biblical languages.<sup>16</sup> It would be expected that Klingman would put great emphasis on church history and ancient languages. In the summers of 1920 and 1921 he went to the University of Chicago to further study Semitic language. Others teaching in the department at that time were H. E. Speck, academic dean of the college, G. C. Morlan, Howard L. Schug and A. R. Holton. Of special interest is the statement, "Abilene Christian College offers free tuition to men who are preaching; the school session lasts thirty-six weeks; \$250.00 will be sufficient for board, room, books, and incidentals..."<sup>17</sup>

One of the hallmarks of Sewell's presidency was the beginning of the Bible Lecture Week in January 1918. Although there had been "preacher's meetings" since 1913, Sewell wanted to have a large forum for all Christians to hear "an imposing array of speakers" and to see first-hand the work of the college. Klingman was selected to begin the series on Monday night with a 7:00 p.m. lecture titled, "Destructive Higher Criticism."<sup>18</sup> The crowds were the largest in the school's twelve year history. The local newspaper described the keynote lecture;

Interest is running high at Abilene Christian College Bible Lecture course. Some of the ablest speakers in the city were present, and pronounced the address on "Destructive Higher Criticism" by Dr. George A. Klingman, one of the greatest ever delivered in this city. Dr. Klingman held his audience, which more than filled the auditorium, spellbound from start to finish.<sup>19</sup>

The following year the lectures were moved to the last week of February, and again Klingman was a featured speaker. This year was the first time the lectures were published. Klingman's subject was "A Great Door is Opened" based on I Corinthians 16:6. He may have been overly ambitious in his enthusiasm of Abilene, or perhaps a prophetic voice when he said,

On account of recent developments in oil and other industries, the eyes of the country are turned toward Abilene...Abilene is not only a commercial center but is also known as an educational center. Our own school, like the school of Tyrannus, has the word of God taught in it daily; and with its present equipment and generous support is destined to become one of the greatest educational institutions of the world...Abilene will become an Ephesus—an "great door and effectual."<sup>20</sup>

His last lecture appearance was in 1922.<sup>21</sup>

For a long time there had been a growing demand that Abilene Christian College become a four year school able to grant the Bachelor's degree. This became a reality in the 1919-1920 school year. The faculty was increased to twenty-five and the curriculum was expanded to include four years of college work.<sup>22</sup> The catalogue described the "College of the Bible Seminary" as offering "three distinct courses" corresponding to the ones on which the denominational Seminaries confer

the degrees of "Graduate in Theology", "Bachelor of Theology" and "Master of Theology." It continued, "This work is offered no where else by our brethren and we appeal to you for the patronage, and moral and financial support it deserves."<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately the brotherhood was not yet ready for such progressive measures, and an anti-intellectual element among preachers led Klingman to leave the college in 1923.

The students at Abilene Christian loved Klingman as a teacher and as a man. He and his wife often had students in their home to sing and enjoy taffy pulls. He was always small of stature, yet impressive with his wavy black hair and mustache. He was described as having "a musical voice with a slight accent," and talked with others about events around him rather than himself.<sup>24</sup> He maintained physical health by playing tennis, and mental health by his sense of humor and musical skills. The school annual for 1919, the *Prickly Pear*, was dedicated to him. It carried the appellation following his picture and name, "A little man with a great brain."<sup>25</sup> When he and his family were preparing to move from Abilene in 1923, the lead article in the student newspaper, *The Optimist*, carried the caption "Farewell Bro. Klingman."<sup>26</sup> He also delivered the baccalaureate sermon for the graduating class on the theme of "The Call Imperative." The newspaper said, "There is but one Brother Klingman and there will never be another." It characterized him as "smiling, energetic, broad-minded, entertaining and very consecrated."<sup>27</sup>

James F. Cox who worked beside Klingman as a fellow teacher and as an elder of the College congregation later wrote that Klingman's greatest service "was his work as a teacher." Then he added these words, "While his teaching was superior, he rendered a still greater service to the church and to humanity by his writing."<sup>28</sup> In 1920, he co-authored with Jesse P. Sewell, *The Bible Outlined in a Hundred Easy Lessons*, and later they co-authored *Class Notes on the Shorter Epistles* for use in the college curriculum.<sup>29</sup>

Klingman and his family moved to Toronto, Canada where he served as minister of the Bathurst Church of Christ. Yet he seemed to be restless, moving in 1925 to teach at Thorp Spring (Texas) College for two years. He also preached for the local congregation there. He took an extended tour of the Bible lands in 1927 sailing from Montreal, with funds supplied by a Fort Worth congregation.<sup>30</sup> While on that trip he attended the World Conferences on Faith and Order, held in Lausanne, Switzerland, and researched his family roots in Germany.<sup>31</sup> In 1929 he wrote another book, *God Is*, to counteract atheism.<sup>32</sup>

He preached for a brief time in Houston during 1928, then in Washington, D. C. in 1929. He moved back to Louisville in 1930 to preach for the Highland Church of Christ. There he was again with some old and dear friends. Some of them were pre-millennialists, like E. L. Jorgensen and Don Carlos Janes, and he was accused of being in sympathy with them.<sup>33</sup>

In 1933 Klingman was invited to teach apologetics and philosophy at Cincinnati Bible Seminary, a school associated with the Christian Churches. The Seminary began in 1924 with support from the Christian

Restoration Association, and was a reaction to the more liberal views of the Disciples of Christ's colleges.<sup>34</sup> Again, he proved to be a popular teacher with the students, and senior class dedicated *The Nautilus*, the school annual for 1934 to him.<sup>35</sup> In a dedicatory poem to Klingman, Professor William C. Sayrs called him, "Thou gentle-hearted man of God, Emotion-filled and gospel shod."<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately Klingman and another professor, R. C. Foster, had a tragic conflict and Klingman was dismissed from the faculty after a year.

It may be asked why Klingman decided to teach at a school connected with the "instrumentalists." Part of the answer lies in the fact that Klingman wanted to teach, and the opportunity was presented to him to help start a "New College of the Bible."<sup>37</sup> He also seemed to view himself as a healer in the brotherhood problems, and continued to preach for congregations of instrumental and non-instrumental as invited. An additional reason for the move to Cincinnati was to be near Fred L. Rowe, editor of the *Christian Leader* and publisher of two of Klingman's books. Leroy Garrett makes the observation that Klingman followed in the spirit of T. B. Larimore, who was never an exclusionist.<sup>38</sup> It is rather evident that Klingman never took such a narrow view of fellowship that he marked individuals or drew lines, but he remained with Churches of Christ.

Perhaps too he was affected by some brotherhood events that were taking place at the time. A fellow classmate of his from the College of the Bible was Hall L. Calhoun who came to the Churches of Christ from the Disciples of Christ in 1925 with considerable publicity. In February 1928 Calhoun was the featured speaker at the Abilene Christian College lectureship.<sup>39</sup> In 1918 Klingman's younger brother, Charles, began preaching for the Disciples. G. H. P. Showalter had an editorial in *Firm Foundation* concerning him with the title "Gone Out From Among Us" that hardened relations between the "Loyals" and the "Digressives."<sup>40</sup> It was an age of transitions, and not all of them were good. Foy E. Wallace, Jr., as editor of the *Gospel Advocate* from 1930-34, took a militant stand against premillennialism and those who espoused it. Klingman felt more comfortable with the editorial policies of the *Christian Leader* published in Cincinnati and the *Missionary Messenger* published in Louisville.<sup>41</sup>

Klingman seemed to always maintain a freshness when studying the Scripture. He talked about having a "loose leaf New Testament" because he was looking for the lost epistle to the Laodiceans.<sup>42</sup> In both his classroom presentations and sermons, he was a moving speaker who involved his listeners in his lessons. People tended to remember him as a vibrant personality.<sup>43</sup> His openness to those who believed differently from him was a part of his generous nature.

Yet his was an age of debates, and premillennial controversy that would later splinter the Churches of Christ was raging. It was a time when some strong willed evangelists and editors wanted congregations and ministers to declare their beliefs and take sides. This was not Klingman's nature, for he was not a fighter. When unjust criticism came

to him because of his failure to declare his stand against premillennialism, he moved elsewhere where he could continue to teach, conduct protracted meetings and serve in local congregations.<sup>44</sup> His sentiment was expressed in a poem, written by Ida Barsett Botts, that he requested be read at his funeral.

I have no creed but Christ, I want no other;  
It leaves my soul unfettered, glad, and free.  
No creed but Christ, and every man my brother.  
That's Christianity enough for me.<sup>45</sup>

A former colleague from Abilene Christian wrote after his death that Klingman tried to follow after peace; he "sympathized with sincere brethren, or whatever side of a religion question they might honestly be" and he was "tolerant of those who differed from him or others." For a man like Klingman, he asserted "there is never a place for a church split or an ecclesiastical combine."<sup>46</sup> Here was a man who was intolerant of sectarianism in an age of being challenged to take a stand. Klingman possessed an irenic spirit.

When his health began to break, in 1935 he and Mrs. Klingman moved to San Angelo, Texas to live near two of their daughters. He died there on December 9, 1939. His funeral was conducted at the Harris and Irving Church of Christ by James F. Cox, the president of Abilene Christian College, and John T. Smith, a noted minister, read a poem. W. H. Free, a long time associate from Abilene Christian, lead the congregational singing.<sup>47</sup>

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>F. L. Klingman, "A Truly Good Brother," *Christian Leader* 54 (January 15, 1940): p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>John A. Klingman, "Following Christ," *Christian Leader* 54 (January 15, 1940): p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>F. L. Klingman, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Ronald E. Jackson, *George Adam Klingman*, unpublished manuscript, May 1971, 6. Special Collections, Brown Library, Abilene Christian University.

<sup>6</sup>G. G. Taylor, *History of Plum Street Church of Christ* (Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe Publisher, 1906, p. 60.

<sup>7</sup>Childers Classical Institute (catalogue) announcements for 1907-1908. Special Collections, Brown Library, ACU.

<sup>8</sup>Jackson, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>George A. Klingman, *Church History for Busy People* (Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, Publisher. 1909).

<sup>10</sup>Letter to Lawrence L. Smith from Marie C. Shultie, Corporation Administrative Officer, State of Delaware, February 27, 1979. George A. Klingman file, Special Collections, Brown Library, Abilene Christian University.

<sup>11</sup>James F. Cox, "G. A. Klingman," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (January 11, 1940): p. 41.

<sup>12</sup>Marianne Klingman Roberts, next to the youngest daughter, telephone interview, March 24, 1993. Later on George, Jr. sang with the Chicago Civic Opera.

<sup>13</sup>*Missionary Messenger* 17 (November 1941): p. 2.

- <sup>14</sup>M. Norvel Young, *A History of Colleges Established and Controlled by Members of the Churches of Christ* (Kansas City, MO: The Old Paths Book Club, 1949), pp. 115-116.
- <sup>15</sup>*Abilene Christian College Catalogue*, Announcement for the Sessions of 1918-1919, Specials Collections, Brown Library, Abilene Christian University, p. 38.
- <sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 39-43.
- <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 39.
- <sup>18</sup>William S. Banowsky, *The Mirror of a Movement, Churches of Christ as Seen Through the Abilene Christian College Lectureship* (Dallas Christian Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 12-13.
- <sup>19</sup>"Large Crowds at Bible Lectures," *Abilene Reporter News*, January 8, 1918, p. 1.
- <sup>20</sup>*ACC Bible Lectures February 23-28, 1919* (Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, Publisher, n.d.), p. 20.
- <sup>21</sup>*ACC Bible Lectures 1922-1923* (Cincinnati, F. L. Rowe, n.d.) Klingman's lecture carried the title, "When That Which is Perfect is Come," pp. 36-43.
- <sup>22</sup>Young, p. 182.
- <sup>23</sup>*Abilene Christian College Catalogue*, 1919-1920, p. 17
- <sup>24</sup>Leon Hinthorne, interview, March 26, 1993. Hinthorne knew Klingman when he was a teenager in Harrisonburg, Virginia in the early 1930s and he and his family drove Klingman to some of his preaching appointments.
- <sup>25</sup>*Prickly Pear* 1919, p. 4.
- <sup>26</sup>*The Optimist* 10 (May 31, 1923): p. 1.
- <sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup>Cox, p. 41.
- <sup>29</sup>J. P. Sewell and G. A. Klingman, *The Bible Outlined in a Hundred Lessons* (Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, Publisher, 1920) and *Class Notes on the Shorter Epistles Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians* (Abilene: Abilene Printing Co. Publisher, n.d.)
- <sup>30</sup>*Word and Work* 20 (June 1927): p. 167.
- <sup>31</sup>F. L. Rowe, "George Adam Klingman," *Christian Leader* 54 (January 15, 1940): p. 13.
- <sup>32</sup>*God Is. An Antidote for the Poisonous Propaganda of "the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, Inc."* (Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, Publisher, 1929).
- <sup>33</sup>Rowe, p. 13.
- <sup>34</sup>James De Forest Murch *Christians Only*, Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1962, p. 244-245.
- <sup>35</sup>*The Nautilus*, 1934. p. 3. Cincinnati Bible Seminary annual.
- <sup>36</sup>P. 2.
- <sup>37</sup>This was the topic of Klingman's address at the Cincinnati Bible Seminary Banquet in 1934. Program in archives of the Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary Library.
- <sup>38</sup>Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 1981. p. 684.
- <sup>39</sup>Adron Doran and J. E. Choate, *The Christian Scholar: A Biography of Hall Laurie Calhoun*. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1985. p. 142-145, 171.
- <sup>40</sup>C. C. Klingman, *My Yesterdays: The Autobiography of Charles Christopher Klingman*, Brownwood, TX: Banner Printing Co. 1971. p. 27-28.
- <sup>41</sup>Robert Hooper, *A Distinct People: A History of the Churches of Christ in the 20th Century*. West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., 1993. pp. 142-56.
- <sup>42</sup>James Burton Coffman, telephone interview, March 27, 1993. Coffman was baptized by Klingman in February 1923.
- <sup>43</sup>Walter H. Adams, who served as Dean of Abilene Christian College, from 1932-69, had Klingman for freshman Bible in fall 1921, and remembered how impressed he was with this teacher.
- <sup>44</sup>Marianne Klingman Roberts interview. She stated, "Papa did not subscribe to the premillennial theories of R. H. Boll."
- <sup>45</sup>Cox, p. 41.
- <sup>46</sup>W. W. Freeman "Brother G. A. Klingman: Friend and Co-worker" *Firm Foundation* 57 (January 16, 1940): p. 4.
- <sup>47</sup>Sister Klingman and Family, "Geo. A. Klingman," *Christian Leader* 54 (January 13, 1940).

## ***Just As I Lived It***

by Lester G. McAllister

(Recalling events occurring over a more than 70-year fellowship in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ))

In the past few years it seems there have been few positive figures in religion put before the American public. This has been true whether one considers either living or deceased persons. When such a personality is honored it is worthy of note.

Upon the death of Harold E. Fey in January, 1990 then living in retirement at Claremont, California, a number of metropolitan newspapers (including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Herald-Tribune*, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, the *Washington Post* and the *Indianapolis Star*) as well as a number of papers in smaller communities took notice of his career in two-column obituaries. Religious journals such as *The Christian Century*, *The Disciple* and others gave considerable space to recounting Harold's achievements.

Harold E. Fey deserved every word of praise given. His was a lifetime of dedication to Christian causes. First and foremost in his interest was world peace. Early in his career he served as a missionary to the Philippines. He was later editor of *World Call*, a missionary magazine of the Disciples; executive of Fellowship of Reconciliation, a peace organization; editor of *The Christian Century* magazine, Chicago and professor of social ethics at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis. His humble and gracious spirit won him friends everywhere.

---

### **C. Jayne Hopson and Thomas P. Hopson Named Fund**

Jayne Hopson has served as Archivist at First Christian Church in Tulsa for the past twenty years. She and husband Tom had their first experience of Sunday School, in the Cradle Roll Department in that church, while their mothers helped with the children and their fathers served as deacons. When they were married in 1950, Tom was a pipe line engineer and subject to frequent transfers. So it was after returning to Tulsa and First Christian Church that Jayne became involved with the history of that church. Old pictures and old records show that Jayne's grandparents and Jayne's and Tom's parents were active members for many years, giving Jayne added incentive for preserving the history of First Christian Church. This Named Fund was established by Mr. and Mrs. Hopson.

## THE ORDER OF STONE-CAMPBELL FELLOWSHIP CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO MEMBERSHIP

More than forty individuals or couples have pledged their support to the Historical Society in an on-going fashion. These persons have named the Historical Society in a permanent gift through their estates. You are invited to consider joining this group. The President of the Historical Society would be happy to talk with you about your interest in helping to provide permanent funds for the future of the Society. It can be done through an Annuity, a Trust Agreement, naming the Society in your Will, through the gift of personal property, or life insurance.

The following persons have taken this step to insure the financial future of the Historical Society. We are pleased to name them as Members of the Order of Stone-Campbell Fellowship.

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A cordial invitation is extended to you to join this dedicated group of persons in the Order of Stone-Campbell Fellowship. Please use the form below to indicate your interest or concern. Mail it to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1101 19th Ave. S., Nashville, TN37212-2196.

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# DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the  
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Disciples of Christ Historical Society was established in 1941 "to maintain and further interest in religious heritage, backgrounds, origins, development, and general history of Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ and related groups."

Members of the Society receive *DISCIPLIANA* quarterly, along with other benefits. Annual membership categories are as follows: Sustaining - \$50 to \$249, Participating - \$25 to \$49, Regular - \$15, Students - \$7.50, Canadian and Overseas - \$20. Single payment Life Memberships are: Life - \$250, Life Link - \$500, Life Patron - \$1,000.

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## —From the Editor's Desk

In recent years, worship has again become a major topic of interest and discussion in churches of the Stone-Campbell movement. The numerical growth of Pentecostal churches which have employed "gospel choruses," drums, guitars, and electronic keyboards in worship has, no doubt, helped to spark interest in Stone-Campbell churches in the topic of appropriate styles of worship. Most recently, the growth of the Willow Creek church in suburban Chicago, which has pioneered a "seekers" service employing dramas and "contemporary" music, has stimulated discussion in Stone-Campbell churches of appropriate strategies for reaching the unchurched and persons who have dropped out of the church. Congregations in the three major branches of the Stone-Campbell movement are currently experimenting with services designed to capture the interest of persons who are outside the church.

The terms "contemporary worship" and "traditional worship" are used with increasing frequency in Stone-Campbell churches. But what do these terms mean? In particular, what is traditional worship in the Stone-Campbell tradition? This topic is much larger than a single issue of *Discipliana*! However, this issue does make a contribution to the discussion.

Johnny Miles provides an overview of Alexander Campbell's views on worship and identifies sources of Campbell's thought. Not surprisingly, given Miles' Church of Christ affiliation, he gives particular attention to the issue of Campbell's view on instrumental music in worship.

Peter Morgan focuses on the early hymnbooks of the Stone-Campbell tradition, exploring the issues that led to their compilation and the controversies that followed their publication. Morgan, who was a member of the committee that developed the Disciples' new *Chalice Hymnal*, suggests that if past Stone-Campbell history is any guide, members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) can expect "varied responses" to decisions made in developing this most recent addition to the heritage of Stone-Campbell hymnbooks.

The articles by Miles and Morgan reveal that worship has changed in the churches of the Stone-Campbell movement since the time of Stone and Campbell. However, it is clear from both articles that certain issues have a way of resurfacing. It is also clear from both articles that the history of "traditional worship" in the Stone-Campbell movement is worthy of investigation as congregations consider how to make the Christian witness in our time.

## — From the President's Desk

Summer is always an interesting time at the Historical Society. It brings a number of youth, seniors and other church groups for a visit to the Society. Recently 40 persons from Cypress Creek Christian Church, Spring, Texas flew to Nashville for several days sightseeing and one of their first stops was a tour of the Historical Society.

Our most recent researcher, as I write this, was Honore Vinck of Borgerhout, Belgium who spent over 20 years as a Roman Catholic missionary to Zaire. His research project was on school books used in mission work in the old Belgium Congo. The area in which he did his mission work was the same as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) mission work. He knew the Disciple missionaries well. His stay of several days gave the entire staff the opportunity to get acquainted with him.

Major efforts this summer are going into the cataloguing of the more than 300 boxes of material sent from Missions Building in Indianapolis as the General Offices of the Disciples of Christ moved from 222 South Downey Ave. to their International Center at 130 East Washington in the heart of the city. Among the material being catalogued are the contents of two corner stones in the old building. The material in the cornerstones, unlike the old fragile material in many corner stones, looked as if it had been put there yesterday. The contents were pictures of Helen E. Moses, Maria Butler Jameson, Mrs. M. E. Harlan, Mary Judson, Nancy Atkinson, Anna Atwater and a picture taken in 1907 at the Ground Breaking for the Missionary Training School. Also in the box were books, a Bible, an audio tape and even a leather covered edition of the "Declaration and Address" by Thomas Campbell.

The collection from Indianapolis contained many of the old records of the early missionary societies with names such as Alexander Campbell, Helen E. Moses, Anna Atwater and others. The Articles of Incorporation of the Christian Women's Board of Missions, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, the American Christian Missionary Society, the United Christian Missionary Society and the College of Missions were included in the collection. David McWhirter, Director of Library and Archives, is placing this material in archival order in acid free boxes for present and future preservation.

The Forrest H. Kirkpatrick Historians Seminar was most successful. The papers by Brenda Brasher, Byron Lambert and Gary Holloway will be published in future issues of *Discipliana*. We are grateful for those who came from near and far. The couple who traveled the farthest were Mr. and Mrs. Masami Togano from Tokyo, Japan.

This fall will find the Society sponsoring lectures on each side of the country. Anthony Dunnivant of Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, Kentucky will be the Forrest F. Reed Lecturer on the theme "Founding Vocation and Future Vision: The Self-understanding of the Disciples of Christ." The two lectures will be given at the Church of the Valley, Van Nuys, California on Monday and Tuesday, September 24 and 25 at 7:30 p.m.

In the East William O. Paulsell will lecture on "Disciples at Prayer" at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society Dinner in Pittsburg, PA at the Lawrence Convention Center on Tuesday, October 24, 1995, 5:30 p.m. This dinner and program will be in connection with the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). An order blank for tickets is included in this issue of *Discipliana*. It is open to the public.

# The Origins of Alexander Campbell's Eclectic Theology of Worship

by Johnny Miles\*

With the possible exception of women's role in the church, no issue has the potential of being as divisive among Churches of Christ as that of worship. Questions ranging from what is "scriptural" to methodology represent the wide gamut of discussion. Too often, the spheres of tradition and scripture overlap so much that differentiating between the two is almost impossible. The problem is further compounded by the naivete of believing that Church of Christ worship practices have not been influenced by preceding religious traditions.<sup>1</sup>

Twentieth century members of Churches of Christ must understand the historical factors that influenced worship in the early nineteenth century to understand and appreciate how Churches of Christ came to where they are. Since Alexander Campbell has significantly influenced Churches of Christ, it is especially important to understand his views on worship. The first part of this paper describes Campbell's general theological principles of worship. His views on the acts and sequence of acts of worship are discussed. His guidelines for the decorum of worshippers, their participation in the acts of worship, and the buildings in which they are to worship also receive attention. The second part focuses on Christian psalmody, which includes instrumental music, an issue troubling the Stone-Campbell movement almost since its inception. The final part explores religious, philosophical, and theological factors believed to have influenced Campbell's theology of worship.

## I

Campbell addressed the topic of worship under "The Restoration of The Ancient Order of Things." This, along with "The Restoration of the Ancient Gospel" would bring Christian unity out of the religious pluralism of the day.

Campbell sought to demonstrate, from rational principles, that there was a divinely instituted worship for the assemblies of the disciples. In doing so, Campbell assumed two positions which he hoped "to hold as impregnable fortresses against all assault." The first position was "Either there is a divinely authorized order of Christian worship in Christian assemblies, or there is not." Campbell explains,

By the phrase, "order of Christian worship," we do not mean the position of the bodies of the worshippers, nor the hour of the day in which certain things are to be done, nor whether one action shall always be performed first, another always second, and another always third, &c. &c. though in these there is an order which is comely, apposite, or congruous with the genius of the religion,...but that there are certain social acts of Christian worship, all of which are to be attended to in the Christian assembly, and each of which is essential to the perfection of the whole as every member to the human body is essential to the perfect man--is that which we wish to convey by the phrase "order of Christian worship."<sup>2</sup>

The social acts Campbell refers to are reading the Scriptures, teaching, exhorting, presiding, praying, singing, giving thanks, breaking the loaf, contributing for the poor. Campbell argued that those who contend there is no “divinely authorized order of Christian worship” in Christian assemblies, must inevitably maintain that there is no disorder, no error, no innovation, no transgression in the worship of the Christian church.

Campbell’s argument continues with his second position, “Either this Christian worship in Christian assemblies is uniformly the same, or it is not.” By uniformly the same, Campbell meant that the same acts of religious worship are performed on every first day in every assembly of disciples.<sup>4</sup> He contrasted this with uniformly different, by which he meant that assemblies differed in which of the ascribed social acts would be practiced. In proving his position, Campbell overstates the case by concluding that a worship “uniformly different” is a worship without order. It is also inconceivable that assemblies can be uniform and yet differ in their practices.

Francis W. Emmons argued that there was a divinely authorized sequence of acts of worship, as well as divinely ordained acts of worship. He saw this sequence spelled out in Acts 2:42.<sup>5</sup> Campbell responded to Emmons’ article by claiming that such an interpretation would lead to a Christian liturgy. For Campbell, the individual congregations decided on the sequence of the acts of worship, though not the acts of worship themselves.

Campbell believed that the worship of the Lord’s day should “be a display of the most rational and religious arrangement--a model, indeed, of the utility and beauty of perfect order.”<sup>6</sup> Gravity, sobriety, and solemnity were the watchwords of this arrangement. J. Henshal believed that Campbell’s views promoted “dry, formal, intellectual worship.” However, Campbell was not against the expression of religious feeling in worship, On the contrary, Campbell believed that the expression of religious feeling in worship was essential to the communication of the Christian faith.

When we survey the countenance of a religious assembly on the Lord’s day, if we discover an evident vacuity of devotional thought, of sentiment, of feeling, (to say nothing of the positive appearance of levity, and vanity, of pride, of carnality) the forms of worship, were they as pure and uncorrupt as those of the virgin church of Jerusalem, would neither illumine the understanding nor propitiate the heart of the intelligent and reflecting spectators.<sup>8</sup>

The Christian’s face and the Christian’s conduct should always correspond with the Christian’s heart. If the Christian’s heart was pure, warm, and full of devout affections, then the outward person should always display that and by so doing “exert an influence on the hearts of his acquaintance of more value than any intellectual illuminations or convictions within the power of mere ratiocination.”<sup>9</sup>

Indications of levity, of passion, or bad feeling were not tolerated in the house of God. Laughing in the church was considered most disorderly. Jests, witticisms, and tart replies were not to be endured. Debates were

inadmissible. The names, attributes, and words of God were to be spoken in gravity, sincerity, and profound reverence, not as the common expletives of language. Purely temporal matters or business pertaining to this life, however connected with the church, was not to be attended to at the hours of worship. Everyone was to address one another in the most affectionate manner. The edification and comfort of the brotherhood, their growth in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord; their increase in knowledge of things divine, spiritual, and eternal--in faith, in love, in hope, and in spiritual joy, were the points to be kept supremely in view in all the business of the Lord's day in the Lord's house.

Being habitually late was considered most indecorous. To withdraw from any meeting before the final 'amen' was considered a violation of the most obvious rules of good order. Also looked upon disfavorably were those individuals constantly going in and out of the assembly and those who whispered and muttered to their companions during the speaker's address.<sup>10</sup>

The Scriptures were to be read with all possible accuracy, distinctness, emphasis, and solemnity. Every disciple was to carry their book to the School of Christ, and use it in all the readings and references.

Accompanying the Scripture readings were prayers. Kneeling was always preferred, when it could be made convenient. If this was inconvenient, then standing was the required posture.<sup>11</sup> Sitting was viewed as a posture of indolence. At the close of all prayers, the whole congregation was to unite with an audible and clear voice, 'Amen.'

The posture of singing, especially with regard to hymns of praise, was standing. It was considered more rational and Scriptural than sitting.<sup>12</sup>

There was also a decorum for the meeting houses. Deciding the sort of house was considered a matter of expediency," as were the meeting times, how often the church would assemble, how long they would meet together, what time of the day the Lord's Supper would be observed, in what order the acts of worship would be done, etc. However, Campbell did suggest the mode or style in which the meeting houses were to be erected.

Stately synagogues, with tall steeples, lofty pulpits, and magnificent galleries, are a satire upon the Christian profession. A Christian meeting-house ought to be humble, commodious, and free from all the splendor of this vain and sinful world. Were we called upon to project a meeting-house consonant to reason and religion, we should have to describe one which we have never seen. It should be a one-story house, without steeple, galleries, or pulpit.<sup>14</sup>

An example of what Campbell deemed an appropriate building for worship is the old Meeting House at Bethany, West Virginia. It is a one-story rectangular building with an inclined floor (for the sake of acoustics and sight lines), simple pews, platform and speaker's stand. The houses of worship were to exhibit to all that the pride of life had no abiding place in the hearts of the worshippers.<sup>15</sup>

As mentioned above, Campbell was against detailing a specific form

of worship for fear of it becoming a liturgy. However, he appreciated the substance of the English liturgy. In Buffalo, New York, he visited the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian services. Commenting on the Episcopalian assembly, Campbell said that “there seemed to me much more marrow and fatness in the bones of the English liturgy and various services, than in the sermon, songs, and prayers of the Baptist or Universalian worship.”<sup>16</sup>

## II

Christian psalmody was chosen as a separate issue to discuss since the instrumental music issue has been the identification tag of Churches of Christ. Under Christian psalmody, the text and the music of the song will be examined.

Campbell held the Psalms of David in high esteem commenting that they “are my standard in all points of good taste, good sense, fervor, feeling, profound devotion, divine sentiment and every other element of pious wonder, love, and praise.”<sup>17</sup>

In 1828, Campbell published his first hymn book entitled *Psalms Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*. He defined psalms as historic compositions or poetic narrative; hymns as songs of praise, in which the excellencies, glories, and gracious acts of some person are extolled; spiritual songs as either songs the matter of which was immediately suggested by the Holy Spirit, or sentimental songs composed on the divine communications to humanity. The edition had one hundred twenty-five “pieces,” divided into three main sections: Psalms (26), Hymns (28), Spiritual Songs (39), and an additional selection of spiritual songs taken from the “Scotch Version of David’s Psalms” (32). While Campbell thought highly of the Psalms of David, he was not in favor of singing only those psalms in worship.<sup>18</sup>

Several factors lay behind the publishing of this hymn book. First, Campbell wanted a hymn book that was suitable for family worship. From his youth, Campbell had been shaped by singing in family worship. Second, Campbell believed that all the denominational hymnals of his day were designed to propound their peculiar creedal sentiments. So, Campbell wanted to design a hymnal from which unscriptural sentiments would be excluded.<sup>19</sup> A third factor was contemporary aesthetic considerations.

Is it not, I ask, a subject of superlative importance to every Christian community, that its psalmody be evangelical, scriptural and chaste, not only in thought, sentiment and feeling, but also in language and style, in good taste, and in good keeping with the progress and character of the age?<sup>20</sup>

In all of the editions of Campbell’s hymnbook during his lifetime, none contained musical notes. He successfully opposed all efforts to bring out an edition of his hymn book “with appropriate music” for the use of a worshipping assembly. Notes were viewed as a distraction to the worshipper.<sup>21</sup>

Campbell was also opposed to using “singing schools” as a means of learning hymns designed for use in worship, though he was not opposed to them as a means of learning music.

Christians should not go to church to learn to sing, nor to learn to spell or read. Let them have good music books, and good teachers, and good schools, but let them not desecrate religious worship, or profane the Lord’s house by converting it into a school room, instead of a house of prayer and praise.<sup>22</sup>

It is more than coincidental that Campbell’s aversion to musical notes in hymn books and singing schools coincides with Silas Leonard’s *Christian Psalmist* hymn book (c. 1847)—a book containing music and hymns for use in congregational worship and singing schools. The editors of the *Christian Psalmist* had pirated several of Campbell’s editions of texts without his permission.<sup>23</sup> Later, Campbell wrote

I have frequently seen some three or four persons, with a “Christian Psalmist” in their hands, performing all the praise, in that branch of social worship in the Christian church, in singing-school style, while all eyes and all ears seemed to be engrossed in the observance of an ecclesiastics-theatrical devotion. My soul sickened at the sight and the sound...<sup>24</sup>

It is well known that Campbell opposed the use of instrumental music in Christian worship. Note his classic quote:

So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think with Mr. G., that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume, to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert.<sup>25</sup>

The “silence of the Scriptures” argument, used by the second generation in opposition to instrumental music, was definitely influenced by John Locke’s epistemology. While Campbell certainly accepted this hermeneutical principle, it was not the basis for his rejection of instrumental music. Instead, the rejection of instrumental music was based on what could be termed his spiritual aesthetic: the lack of appropriateness of instrumental music in the simple worship style he felt was appropriate to the Christian faith.<sup>26</sup> It was not until the years after Campbell’s death that the issue of instrumental music in worship became grounds for separation among the followers of Stone and Campbell.<sup>27</sup>

### III

Theology is never developed in a vacuum. Campbell admitted to being an eclectic drawing freely from religious, philosophical, and theological resources in shaping his restoration agenda.<sup>28</sup>

Several factors influenced Campbell’s theology of worship. One of these factors was the Second Great Awakening, which began in the

latter years of the eighteenth century. By 1803 revival movements had influenced religious life in virtually every part of the United States.<sup>29</sup> After 1803, revival continued sporadically in some areas for many years--e.g., Kentucky, 1827-1829. The influence of revivals was felt nowhere more strongly than in the upper Ohio valley. It was in this area that the Campbell debates were conducted. Though more than two decades had elapsed between the decline of the revival fervor and Campbell's debate with Robert Owen, the great interest in religious themes, generated by the revival, was still being felt. The emotional fervor and religious enthusiasm generated by the revivals was at least partially responsible for the intellectual interest in religion.<sup>30</sup>

It was in this milieu that Campbell's thoughts concerning religion became fully developed. At best, Campbell entertained a strong ambivalence towards the popular revivalism of his day. He was attracted by the powerful evangelistic preaching of the revivals but he was turned away by the fanaticism of some revivalistic preaching. Campbell felt these revivals were of men and that true revival only came from God.<sup>31</sup>

In Campbell's mind, many revivals were "animal and imaginative" and when the revival was over, the "animal powers" would invariably cool, leaving the convert as cold and as dark within as before the revival, with "no fire in the soul--no light, nor knowledge, nor faith resting upon the rock of ages." Such revivals resulted in "apostacies, backsidings and public scandals." Campbell judged the revivals as being "a real disadvantage to the cause of true and vital religion."<sup>32</sup> A great deal more was lost by them than was gained.

Closely related to Campbell's view of popular revivalism was his psychology of conversion. He did not stand alone in his strong criticism of the problems of bodily exercises and fanaticism often associated with revivals. These problems had also troubled George Whitefield. Both Campbell and Whitefield were confronted with the same problem: Where did the work of the Spirit of God end, and where did human initiation begin?<sup>33</sup> This was a relevant issue since the revivals were considered special times when God poured out God's Spirit. For Campbell, though, conversion was not something mysterious. Rather, the Holy Spirit used arguments addressed to the mind to bring sinners to right relationship with God. There was no internal working of the Holy Spirit.<sup>34</sup> The behavior of persons who believed and celebrated the gospel was critical to the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing persons to faith. Thus, Campbell's negative reaction to the revivals (mirrored in his rational, intellectual, and formal approach to worship) was directly related to his psychology of conversion.

Another factor that influenced Alexander Campbell's thought was the Scottish Independent restoration groups in Ireland and Scotland. Representatives of these groups were John Glas, Robert Sandeman, James and Robert Haldane, Greville Ewing, and others, who broke away from the Church of Scotland seeking the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

John Glas led the Scottish restoration movement in the early

eighteenth century. One of the themes that can be traced through the Scottish Reformation and Restoration movements was that of ecclesiastical independence and autonomy of local churches.<sup>35</sup> Glas's teachings are significant here. He taught congregational autonomy, viewed the "elements" of the Lord's Supper as representative of the body and blood of Jesus, and, using Acts 20:7 for his authority, believed that the Lord's Supper must be observed every first day of the week.<sup>36</sup>

Influenced by Greville Ewing's congregational ideas, the Haldanes left the Church of Scotland. James Haldane was also greatly influenced by Glas and Sandeman. The similarities between Haldane and Glas are seen in the idea of "restitution" or "restoration," congregational autonomy, and weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. The Haldanes stressed the necessity for scriptural authorization in all acts of worship. Without it there could be no license to change the worship.<sup>37</sup>

Often in the *Millennial Harbinger*, Campbell discussed the influence of John Glas's writings on himself. Campbell concurred with Glas on congregational independence, weekly observance of the Lord's Supper and anticreedalism.<sup>38</sup>

Several of Campbell's American contemporaries felt his thought was Sandemanian, a tag Campbell rejected. He disliked the dogmatic and uncharitable attitude in some Sandemanians. However, Campbell was in accord with Sandeman on some of his teachings--e.g., the interpretation of worship and the restoration principle.<sup>39</sup>

Like his Scottish forerunners, Campbell understood the Lord's Supper as a weekly memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

To what extent worship services in Campbell's churches paralleled those of the Scottish Independent restorationist congregations is uncertain. It is obvious that the theologies between the two on certain issues parallel exactly.

In conclusion it can be said that Alexander Campbell's theology of worship was not simply scriptural. Even he admitted to the eclectic nature of his agenda. Campbell was unable to transcend history and the affects of his own socio-cultural and religious milieu upon him. His theology of worship (including general principles, its acts and sequence of acts, the decorum of worshippers and meeting houses, hymnals, singing schools, instrumental music) was specifically developed within this milieu by aesthetic, religious, philosophical, and psychological factors. And it is because of the indelible imprint that has been made upon Churches of Christ to the present day via his eclectic theology (in general, but here specifically with regard to the issue of worship), that his eclectic theology of worship has been examined.

\*Johnny Miles is a Ph. D. student at Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>This mentality has been described by such terms as 'ahistorical' and 'historylessness.' Both suggest the thought of being above history so as not to be influenced by the religious

corruption that took place within the history of Christianity for some eighteen centuries. Our movement claims to have no history because we go back to the first century church. The idea of 'historylessness' became too difficult to sustain as the harsh reality of religious pluralism had particularized the "Christian" movement and thrust it into the sea of finite history. Faced with this dilemma, restoration became for some Christians an accomplished fact rather than a process. See Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 121, 125.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things. No. V." *The Christian Baptist* 2, no. 1 (August 2, 1824): 240.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Richardson, "Order--No. 4. Services," *Millennial Harbinger* 7, no. 12 (December 1836): 562 (Hereafter designated as *MH*). From Campbell's article "Order of Worship" in *MH* 2, no. 6 (June 1838): 250, it appears that the social acts are not totally defined.

<sup>4</sup>*The Christian Baptist* 2, no. 1 (August 2, 1824): 241.

<sup>5</sup>See Francis W. Emmon's article, "The Ancient Order of Things In The Public Worship of The Christian Congregations," *The Christian Preacher* 1, no. 4 (April 1836): 73-91.

<sup>6</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Order of The Church As Respects Worship," *MH* no. 8 (October 1835): 508.

<sup>7</sup>"A Hint To The Disciples," *MH* 1, no. 5 (January 1834): 34; also, see *MH* 3, no. 9 (September 1846): 539, where Campbell himself intimated at the displeasure of cold and formal worship which he had experienced at the Baptist church on the Lord's day in Buffalo, New York. Campbell had even warned against "the stiffness and formality which sprang from law, or mere rules of decorum," "Reply," *MH* 2, no. 6 (June 1831): 272. In Campbell's detailed guidelines for decorum though, he created that which he sought to avoid.

<sup>8</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Reformation--No. X," *MH* 4, no. 7 (April 1836): 179.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>10</sup>*MH* no. 8 (October 1835): 509-10.

<sup>11</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Church Organization," *MH* 2, no. 2 (February 1845): 66. This practice is still observed by the Church of Christ at Meaford, Ontario. See Claude Cox, "The Order of Worship at The Church of Christ, Meaford, Ontario," *Restoration Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (4th Quarter 1990): 225.

<sup>12</sup>Kneeling was viewed as a sign of submission, standing as a sign of reverence, and sitting was a sign of nothing.

<sup>13</sup>*MH* no. 8 (October 1835): 509.

<sup>14</sup>"Meeting-Houses," *MH* 1, no. 5 (January 1834): 8.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>16</sup>*MH* 3, no. 9 (September 1846): 540.

<sup>17</sup>"Psalmody," *MH* 7, no. 3 (March 1843): 129.

<sup>18</sup>Enos Dowling, "The Alexander Campbell Hymn Book (I 828-1865)," *Restoration Quarterly* 30, no. 2 & 3 (2nd & 3rd Quarter 1988): 145-46.

<sup>19</sup>Forrest W. McCann, "The Hymnals of The Restoration Movement," *Restoration Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1st Quarter 1976): 28. See also "Psalmody--No. I," *MH* 1, no. 10 (October 1851): 576.

<sup>20</sup>*MH* 1, no. 10 (October 1851): 576.

<sup>21</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Psalmist. Proposals," *MH* 4, no. 3 (March 1847): 179.

<sup>22</sup>*MH* 4, no. 3 (March 1847): 179.

<sup>23</sup>Royal Humbert, ed., *A Compend of Alexander Campbell's Theology* (St. Louis, MO: The Bethany Press, 1961), fn. 19, p. 180.

<sup>24</sup>*MH* 1, no. 10 (October 1851): 577.

<sup>25</sup>"Instrumental Music," *MH* 1, no. 10 (October 1851): 582.

<sup>26</sup>Dale A. Jorgenson, *Theological and Aesthetic Roots in The Stone-Campbell Movement* (Kirksville, MO: The Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1989), 204.

<sup>27</sup>The claim is made that since Campbell did censure the use of instrumental music in worship then he is as guilty as the generation after him who pushed matter of expediency as a ground of separation. Denton Ray Lindley, *Apostle of Freedom* (St. Louis, MO: The Bethany Press, 1957), 127. While it is true that Campbell did censure the use of instrumental music, that is not to say that he used it as a test of fellowship. In fact,

Campbell "reported of his own participation in the services of churches that used instruments, an action which clearly demonstrates his categorical refusal to separate from other Christians for this reason alone." *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>28</sup>Michael Casey, "The Origins of The Hermeneutics of The Churches of Christ. Part Two: The Philosophical Background," *Restoration Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (4th Quarter 1989): 193-see also Motonobu Ikeda, "A Critical Comparison of The Hermeneutics On The Silence of Scripture Among Churches of Christ and Independent Christian Churches" (Masters Thesis, Abilene Christian University, 1992), 4.

<sup>29</sup>Max Ward Randall, *The Great Awakenings and The Restoration Movement* (Joplin MO: College Press Publishing Co., 1983), 360.

<sup>30</sup>Bill J. Humble makes the point that "a scholarly discussion of vital religious issues would naturally arouse more popular interest within a community where the cultural background was strongly religious and controversial than in one whose religion tradition was one of cold, though intellectual, formalism," *Campbell and Controversy* (Kansas City, MO: Old Paths Book Club, 1952), 66.

<sup>31</sup>"Religious Excitement - no. 1," *MH* 4, no. 4 (April 1840): 170. Randall, 361-64. The revivalists, however, felt that the revivals were of God, Ronald Bever, "The Effluence of The 1827-29 Revivals On The Restoration Movement," *Restoration Quarterly* 10, no. (3rd Quarter 1967): 134.

<sup>32</sup>*MH* 4, no. 4 (April 1840): 167-8.

<sup>33</sup>Randall, 373-77.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 368-70, 381-82. For further discussion of Campbell's psychology of conversion and his view of the working of the Holy Spirit compared and contrasted with those of Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, see D. Newell Williams, "The Gospel As The Power of God To Salvation: Alexander Campbell and Experimental Religion," in *Lectures In Honor of The Alexander Campbell Bicentennial, 1788-1988* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1988), 127-48.

<sup>35</sup>Lynn A. McMillon, *Restoration Roots* (Dallas: Gospel Teachers Publications Inc., 1983), 1-2.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 30-1, 34-5.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 75-80.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

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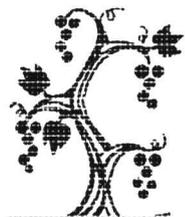
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# Disciples Hymnbooks A Continuing Quest For Harmony

by Peter M. Morgan\*

Old questions reverberate around new hymnbooks. In 1995, *Chalice Hymnal* will become the hymnbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It will take its place beside, and is apt to eventually replace, *Christian Worship, A Hymnal*, first published in 1941, and *Hymnbook for Christian Worship*, published in 1970.

Two fundamental questions demand attention whenever the possibility of a new hymnal is considered: why and what. New hymnals are expensive to create. Why not reprint older hymnals? Why is the new needed? What changes in the church or the world or in music or worship justify a new hymnal? What needs are not being met by the currently used hymnals? The “why” questions.

The “what” questions emerge from the “why” or purpose questions. What in the new hymnal will make it an effective resource to meet current needs? What guidelines will determine the material included in the hymnal? Carlton R. Young, editor of *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 1989, clearly identified the task in a consultation with *Chalice Hymnal*'s development committee. “Fundamentally the committee draws a circle and decides what is inside the circle (included in the hymnal) and what is not.”<sup>1</sup> Those decisions are based on two underlying questions: Why is this hymnal needed now and what kind of hymnal will meet those needs?

“Why” and “what,” related to hymnals, are old questions. The early leaders of the restoration movement had to address those questions. This essay will examine the hymnals created by the founders of the Stone-Campbell movement in the late 1820s through the 1830s with an eye to discovering their answers to “why” and “what.” We begin with a brief look at the lives and thoughts of the founders as related to music.

## The Founders - A Musical Mix

**Thomas Campbell** (1763-1854) was probably the least musical of the founders. Isaac Errett passes on a story of Father Campbell's lack of musical sensitivity and ability. Thomas was a guest preacher in a Pittsburgh congregation. He stood in the pulpit and rebuked the congregation for having the best singers sitting together with a leader and also for reading musical notes. He did not want the music to be a vain performance of musical talent, but rather a melody of the heart offered in unostentatious devotion. That concern was not unique to Father Campbell. But, according to Errett, he went even further by instructing the congregation

... if a brother or sister found the tune pitched too high ... pitch it a little lower. Let every one pitch it to suit himself. He saw no necessity for one tune for the whole church, and he thought that every one could sing his own tune, altering the words to whatever sound would best express the worship of the heart.

Errett adds, we imagine with a chuckle, “He practiced what he taught.”<sup>2</sup>

Father Campbell, as best as can be determined, sat on no hymnal committee. Yet he made a major indirect contribution by helping us understand worship, the setting where our music expresses our faith and voices the prayers of our hearts.

Moving against the theology of his time, he taught that worship is not the seeking out of God. Nor is it the maneuvering of possible converts so that they may discover God. It was no pleading to discover whether or not one was among the elect. Worship is much less self absorbed. It is objectively focused on God. God is the initiator. God is the object of the worshippers' attention.

The author and ultimate object of our holy religion is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by his Spirit, speaking in Christ and his holy apostles.

The action of the worshipping community in response to God's initiative is a "correspondent faith."<sup>3</sup>

Colbert Cartwright helps us understand and complete this interaction in worship by describing Thomas Campbell's theology as "reflexive."

Worship is "reflexive" in the sense that as Christians glorify God, known in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, the glory of God's countenance shines back into the Christians' lives to imprint God's image upon their hearts. Worship is reflexive: God mirrors back to us that love we send forth toward him.<sup>4</sup>

**Alexander Campbell** (1788-1866) seems to have inherited his father's lack of musical ability. Selina Campbell gives this delightful glimpse of her unmusical husband:

Dear Mr. Campbell was a lover of good music; he had when young received lessons in the art, but, as he said, "was born tuneless;" he understood time and loved to make a "joyful noise." He could almost sing "Hail the blest morn! When the great Mediator" etc., and when riding together, through the vales and over the hills of Bethany, he was sure to commence with ecstasy: "'Tis not the law of ten commands," but always turned to the last verse:

"Israel, rejoice, now Joshua (Jesus) leads,  
He'll bring your tribes to rest;  
So far the Savior's name exceeds,  
The ruler and the priest."<sup>5</sup>

Alexander's musical influence far exceeded his musical ability.

Unlike his father, Alexander exerted the most direct influence on early Disciples hymnals. He edited the Reformers' first hymnal, and also the first hymnal after the union with Stone's Christians. In his lifetime his hymnals went through 45 editions. Other hymnbooks which came into the movement were reactions against what were perceived as the limits of Mr. Campbell's efforts.

*Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* became a major financial resource to Mr. Campbell and later to the training of church leaders at

Bethany College.

J. W. McGarvey, for example, was one of the scholarship recipients from income from the hymnal. Later, Mr. Campbell continued this financial support for students by establishing in his will that income from the hymnal was to go to the American Christian Missionary Society.

Alexander Campbell, like his father, had a theological basis for his understanding of music. The New Testament identified “ordinances, delivered to the church by her exalted redeemer, which she is constantly to observe in all her meetings to worship him.”<sup>6</sup> Campbell’s definition of ordinances: “THE MODE IN WHICH THE GRACE OF GOD ACTS UPON HUMAN NATURE. The ordinances of Christianity are, therefore, the powers of the gospel of the grace of God.”<sup>7</sup>

He believed and taught that music was in this extensive list of acts which bestow grace on the worshiper. Congregational singing is a New Testament ordinance. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:19)

Campbell even attempted hymn writing. Five of his hymns appear in his hymnals. Long-term evaluation of Campbell’s poetic efforts has not been kind. Royal Humbert summed it up in 1936. “Fortunate for hymn singers of posterity, Alexander’s folly in attempted verse succumbed to a natural and inevitable death.”<sup>8</sup> None of Campbell’s hymn efforts are currently in publication. *Chalice Hymnal* will not revive any of his hymns. Disciples will, however, sing David Edward’s musical paraphrase of Campbell’s work from *The Christian System* on the personal and social character of the Lord’s Supper:

*You my friend, a stranger once, do now belong to heaven. Once far away, you are brought home into God’s family. “When you do this, remember me.”*

*Now my Lord is also yours, my people are your own; embraced together in God’s arms, I enfold you now in mine. “When you do this, remember me.”<sup>9</sup>*

Campbell was a thorough and thoughtful editor of hymnbooks. He knew their importance. “The Christian hymn-book, next to the Bible,... wields the largest and mightiest formative influence upon young and old, upon the saint and sinner, of any other book in the world.... If the hymn book is daily sung in the family, and in the social meetings of the brethren, it must imbue their souls with its sentiments more than all the other labors of the pulpit or the press.”<sup>10</sup>

**Barton Stone** (1772-1844), like Alexander Campbell, edited hymnals and wrote hymn texts. Unlike Campbell, he did not publish substantial material relating his views of church music, singing in worship or hymnals. His first hymnal does not even have a preface. He wrote only one short item on music in his journal, *The Christian Messenger*.

Stone’s article is a theological study of the atonement hymns from a hymnbook of the time. Stone’s point was that hymns need more than

a zealous spirit. “(We) dare not pronounce it an acceptable service unless it be in truth, and with understanding.”<sup>11</sup> He wanted no part of hymns portraying a vengeful God who needed Christ’s blood to save us. He used the theology of the scripture as a measure for evaluating the texts of these atonement hymns. The passion and truth of the atonement, as Stone saw it, is expressed in one of his own hymns:

Behold the love, the grace of God, Displayed in Jesus’ precious blood;  
*My soul’s on fire, it pants to prove The fullness of redeeming love.*

Our God is love — O, leap, my soul! Let warm hosannas gently roll!  
*Love gave his Son to save our race, And Jesus died thro’ sov’reign grace!*<sup>12</sup>

*Chalice Hymnal* is returning this hymn to the Disciples’ musical repertoire.

Barton Stone’s life tells us what his few writings on hymns do not. Music was an important part of his formation in the faith and it continued as an important expression of his own devotion to God.

Stone, an aspirant lawyer, was a student at David Caldwell’s school at Guilford, North Carolina, in 1790. At the school, “I was not a little surprised to find these pious students [who had been converted by Presbyterian evangelist James McGready] assembled every morning... and engaged in singing and prayer in a private room.”<sup>13</sup> The music of these students contributed to his conversion.

In May, 1796, the young preacher Stone struggled with his faith. On one occasion in Virginia the congregation’s singing and praying enabled him to speak “with boldness, and profit to the people.”<sup>14</sup>

The great revival of Cane Ridge in 1801 was filled with singing: “singing ecstasies” by individuals struck by the Spirit, revival choruses and seventeenth and eighteenth century European hymns for group singing.

The aged and ill Barton Stone made a farewell visit to Cane Ridge in 1843, the year before he died. On the way he stopped in Ohio to see David Purviance, a friend and colleague for forty-seven years. They sang and prayed together. At Cane Ridge, Stone requested that the congregation sing “That good song ‘*The Family Bible That Lay on the Stand.*’”<sup>15</sup>

Barton Stone came to the faith accompanied by music. He called for music as he said farewell to friends in the faith. He was our founder who spoke little of music but used it well in a lifetime of ministry.

**Walter Scott** (1796-1861) was our most musical founder. He was an accomplished musician. In his teaching and in the hymnbooks he edited, his influence became a counterweight to Alexander Campbell’s emphasis on the importance of hymn texts alone.

Young Scott was reared in a musical family. His father was a music teacher who taught his son. Walter had a pleasing singing voice and had such talent for the flute that he attracted the attention of a prominent instructor. Soon the student’s ability surpassed his teacher’s ability.

He knew the power of music to awaken a response. When he was a

university student, he came upon a blind beggar who had received no money from those who passed him by. Scott took pity, stood beside the man and began to sing. After each song the gathered crowd filled the blind man's hat with coins. Scott continued singing far into the night. The blind beggar implored heaven's richest blessing on the youthful singer.

Scott began his career as a teacher of English and classic languages. He taught first in Jamaica, Long Island and then in Pittsburgh in a school under the leadership of George Forrester. Forrester profoundly influenced Scott's view of scripture and the church. During this time, Scott met Alexander Campbell and the course of his future was set.

Five years after meeting Campbell, Scott lived in Steubenville, Ohio and had begun his great ministry as an evangelist in the Mahoning Baptist Association. Music was crucial in his ministry. He traveled with a singing evangelist, William Hayden.

Scott would preach and exhort. Those who witnessed his preaching report that he did not have the consistency of Alexander Campbell. Sometimes he fell short of expectations. When he was good, however, he was very good, even surpassing Campbell.

There were times when he rose to a height of eloquence which [Campbell] never equalled.... Scott, in his happiest moments, seemed like Peter on The Memorable Pentecost, with the cloven tongue of flame on his head, and the inspiration of the spirit of truth in his heart.<sup>16</sup>

In those evangelistic meetings, Hayden had a prominent place as song leader and soloist.

Walter Scott knew the importance of music in religious life. "It is the office of a hymn to arouse impassioned devotional feeling, even as it is the office of teaching to illuminate understanding."<sup>17</sup>

He stressed the importance of all believers cultivating the ability to participate in this ordinance of worship. "The command to sing is delivered to all indiscriminately, and the duty to learn to sing is equally incumbent on all."<sup>18</sup>

Scott's own musical background reinforced his message of the importance of training congregations to sing. "It is a fact that we can no more obey the command to sing unless we are at first taught to sing, than we can obey the command to read unless we are first taught to read. Let us then try to fix the heart of God's young people by encouraging them to study sacred music; and of course to love the exercise of singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, as they are commanded by the Holy Spirit. The cultivation of sacred music I judge to be a most important means appointed by God, confirming the professors of religion in their most holy faith."<sup>19</sup>

Scott acted on his musical convictions. One means to achieve effective singing churches was through singing schools. He organized such a singing school in his congregation in Carthage, Ohio. Another means was to provide resources to enrich the singing of the church. He commended Mason's *Sacred Harp* and encouraged congregations to

purchase the *Manual of The Boston Academy of Music*. His greatest contribution, however, may have been in the hymnbooks he edited in 1839. Those were our first hymnals which went beyond printing texts only. Scott took the modest but significant step of printing recommended tune titles with each text.

*Chalice Hymnal* has no compositions by Walter Scott. Scott was the Disciples' most musical founder. Yet, he composed no known tunes, or wrote no known hymn texts. It is an irony possibly explained by Scott's own great respect for high musical standards that he left no music or texts for Disciples to sing.

### **The First Hymnbooks**

The four founders, very diverse in musical gifts and backgrounds, set the course for Disciples' hymnals by the hymnbooks they compiled from 1828 through 1839. Congregational singing has been integral to the restoration/reformation movement from the beginning. At Cane Ridge, there was not just "singing ecstasies" among individuals caught up in religious fervor. Small groups also engaged in singing the hymns of Isaac Watts and Joseph Hart. The "hippity, skippity" choruses, typical of frontier revivals, could also be heard across the grounds of Cane Ridge. Thomas Campbell's Washington Association, at its first meeting, sang Psalm 118, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth forever."<sup>20</sup>

Twenty-five years elapsed between "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery" and Barton Stone's and Thomas Adams' *The Christian Hymn Book*, 1829. The Washington Association and its successors waited nineteen years until Alexander Campbell published *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1828. Our founders had come to a time when they had to address the "why" and the "what." "Why, for what purpose, do we need a hymnbook?" "What kind of hymnbook will fulfill that purpose?"

***Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 1828.*** In the troubled last months of Thomas and Alexander Campbell's fellowship with the Redstone Baptist Association, Disciples were singing from a small hymnbook compiled by Alexander. *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, 1828, is a collection of 125 hymn texts in a volume with page sizes which are only 3" x 5". The hymn texts are organized into the three sections designated in the title of the book. There is a substantial preface. The volume concludes with an essay on prayer and an index of the first lines of texts.

No music or tune suggestions are printed in the book. Congregational singing at the time was unaccompanied by any musical instrument. The custom was for a leader to select a tune and announce it. The congregation then sang the text from the words-only book. This hymnbook's only musical aid is meter markings: C.M. for common meter, L.M. for long meter, and P.M. for particular meter.

Why was a hymnal needed by Alexander Campbell's reformers in

1828? Robert Richardson gives the summary of Campbell's rationale:

Having been much dissatisfied with the character of many of the psalms and hymns in general use, whose sentiments he thought were not in accordance with the New Testament, Mr. Campbell was at this time engaged in preparing a hymn-book from which unscriptural sentiments were to be excluded and which he hoped to render acceptable to the now numerous friends of the Reformation.<sup>21</sup>

Campbell states in the preface the primary purpose by which to evaluate the church's music:

The general design of all religious worship is to praise God, and to edify men. But sometimes we sing for the sole purpose of praising God; on other occasions, for the information or edification of men. In the former case we sing hymns as best adapted - in the latter psalms or spiritual songs...

No exercise of social worship is more delightful, solemn, or sublime, than singing the praises of the Lord. And when we address him in sacred song, care should be taken that the substance and form, or the matter and manner of our song, be such as will be acceptable to him.<sup>22</sup>

What is acceptable? The biblical revelation expressed from our own hearts in well chosen words. That standard was not being met, according to Campbell, by hymnbooks then available. He gives samples of hymns, and tests them by this plumb line. He concludes:

1. They are, in toto, contrary to the spirit and genius of the Christian religion.
2. They are unfit for any congregation, as but few in any one congregation can, with regard to truth, apply them to themselves.
3. They are an essential part of the corrupt systems of this day, and a decisive characteristic of the grand apostasy.<sup>23</sup>

Campbell's vision was to bring unity to the churches on the basis of New Testament Christianity. A hymnbook which eliminated sectarianism and reflected that revelation was needed. Toward that end, Campbell offered the church *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*.

What guidelines helped Campbell produce a hymnal which met the purpose he identified? He sought only the most worthy texts for worshipping God.

What is worthy of the christian's song?... Let the love of God our Father, the praises of the character, and the glories of the achievements of the Captain of our Salvation, animate our strains. Let our sentimental songs be of the same exalted character with the subjects of faith, hope, and love; and let not the little, low, selfish, schismatical, and sectarian topics, find a place in this sublimest of all exercises known amongst men.<sup>24</sup>

Singing in worship, for Campbell, was musical prayer. As we are free to create and select the prayers we offer to God, so too we are free to create and select our music, "provided that the words selected be according to the truth taught in the Bible."<sup>25</sup>

The Bible gives us the truth for our worshipful music and also gives us the form our music is to take. Psalms are historic compositions or

poetic narratives. Hymns are songs of praise directed to our object of devotion. Spiritual songs declare the sentiments derived from the revelations of God which we use to express feelings of devotion and to edify others. The 1828 hymnbook was organized by these categories. Campbell provided fifty-eight psalms, twenty-eight hymns and thirty-nine spiritual songs.

What is not worthy of worship through music? Music which is so attentive to tune and tempo that it detracts from the content of the text. He adamantly opposed singing schools.

Campbell's most serious denouncement, however, was for music which focused the worshippers' attention on sectarian causes. He concluded his preface:

In closing these prefatory remarks we would take the liberty of exhorting christians to employ themselves more in the exercise of social praise, than in conversing upon the speculations of the day. If the moments devoted to religious controversy and bickerings about words to no profit were redeemed to the praises of the Lord, our lives would be more fruitful in good works, and much more happy than they are. While all differences in sentiment have something of a repulsive tendency, our frequent repetition of the same sentiments, views, and feelings, in our solemn praises, have the most powerful attractive influence on our affections, and contribute much to our growth in that love which is the best evidence to ourselves and to all men that we are the disciples of the Son of God.<sup>26</sup>

Campbell made liberal use of his editorial pen to produce a hymnal which met his high standards. All standards of judgement were subordinate to the content of the texts.

We have used our pen pretty liberally in erasing some words, altering others, and in new-modifying whole stanzas, to save some valuable songs, excellent in the general scope, from being proscribed by the laws of the New Covenant from admission into the christian worship. Sometimes poetic beauties have been sacrificed for a pure speech, rather than we should sing fine poetry at the expense of the purity and simplicity of the christian style.<sup>27</sup>

Only 125 hymns merited inclusion in Campbell's first hymnbook. Campbell attributed the small size to high standards.

We have one apology for the smallness of this selection. We explored all the good selections, European and American, and took thirty of the good old psalms of David to complete the work. We could find but very few songs adopted to the genius of the christian religion and of pure speech... I am fully of the opinion that a few evangelical songs on the proper themes, memorized by a whole congregation, cordially approved and well digested, will be sung with much happier effect, than the vague and random choice of some new and unexplored song, selected at the spur of the moment.<sup>28</sup>

***The Christian Hymnbook, 1829.*** In 1829, Barton W. Stone, like Alexander Campbell the year before, came to the moment of deciding that a hymnbook was needed, and produced *The Christian Hymnbook* for his followers. Stone put *The Christian Hymnbook* into his followers' hands twenty-five years after "The Last Will and Testament of the

Springfield Presbytery." It was edited by Stone and Thomas Adams in Georgetown, Kentucky, at the request of the Miami Christian Conference. Like Campbell's work, its page size was small. In contrast to Campbell's hymnbook, it had more selections, 340 hymns on 370 pages. The editors organized their work by subjects and also included a topical index along with an index of first lines. Subjects included, "The Lord's Supper," "Love and Union," "Penitential," "Baptism," and many others. Some of the hymns were printed with scriptural citations. Singing was assisted only by the printing of metrical indicators. No music or suggested tune names were given.

Unfortunately, Stone's and Adams' discussion of the questions of "why" and "what" cannot be addressed. They did not publish a preface. Three years later, 1832, Stone collaborated on another hymnbook, this time with John T. Johnson. Again, the rationale and criteria for hymn selection are unknown. This second version of *The Christian Hymnbook* is not available to today's researchers.

***Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 1834.*** The momentous handshake between "Raccoon" John Smith and Barton W. Stone on January 1, 1832 in Lexington, Kentucky, was a sign of the union between Campbell's Reformers and Stone's Christians. The answer to the "why" question for *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 1834*, was obvious. This newly formed body needed a common hymnbook. Soon after the union was declared, Alexander Campbell initiated a move to combine the hymnals of the parties. Walter Scott reports in *The Millennial Harbinger*

...there were of course two hymnbooks in the field at the same time... As a best remedy for the evil, it was deemed most advisable by brother Campbell to make of the twain one new hymnbook; and for this reason addressed an epistle to the brethren Stone and Johnson... requesting them to concur with him in the production of a new one... This the brethren approved and... deemed it a very necessary movement and one to which they now most willingly acceded.<sup>29</sup>

*The Disciples' Hymnbook* was offered to the congregations. Soon afterward, the hymnbook appeared with a new cover which was retitled *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. That rapid shift in titles was no mere editorial refinement. It is a clue that the union between the Reformers and Christians, and especially among the founders, was not always harmonious. The story is best told by one of the insiders to the controversy.

Barton Stone details the dispute in reply to a letter in *The Christian Messenger*.

You insist upon an answer from me respecting a Hymn Book, entitled, "The Disciples' Hymn Book," having my name, with those of Campbell, Scott and Johnson, affixed to it. I will explain the matter. It had been agreed among us all to print a Hymn Book in conjunction in order to consolidate the union happily begun among us. It was proposed that we should meet together at some central point to prepare the book. While brother Johnson and myself were waiting in

readiness to attend when informed where and when, brother Scott having gone to Virginia, met with brother Campbell there; and they agreed to make the selections of Hymns themselves alone, and print them, and send us the proof-sheets into Kentucky for our correction. The first form was sent, having the title, "The Disciples' Hymn Book" with all our names affixed. As soon as brother Johnson and myself saw the title of the book, and the prefaces, we determined to have nothing to do with it, and immediately wrote to brother Campbell our determination. We received from him an answer that the first forms of 6,000 sheets were printed off and that it could not be easily altered. Brother Johnson and myself prevailed on brother Flemming to go to brother Campbell's in Virginia and to bear our instructions to him, that if he would erase the title, and substitute another; and if he would remove the prefaces, and insert certain Hymns in our former Hymn book, our names might stand. Brother Campbell said that it would spoil the book to remove the prefaces, but that he would alter the title. It was agreed that he should go on with the printing of the book. He did alter the title of those issued from his office, except what he had previously sent to brother Scott in Ohio. Brother Scott issued his without alteration. His reason for so doing I have not learned....<sup>30</sup>

The issue described by Barton Stone allows us to draw inferences about the "what" questions. What criteria will measure the choices for the hymnbook? What procedure will be used in making decisions for compiling the hymnbook?

The 1834 hymnbook is clearly the work of Alexander Campbell and not that of the prestigious panel named on the title page. Mr. Campbell presumed that his supposed collaborators would automatically endorse his efforts. They did not.

Walter Scott and Alexander Campbell wrote introductory material for the hymnbook. Those comments offer a reiteration of Mr. Campbell's criteria stated in his 1828 hymnal. Scott picks up the theme that the purpose of worship is to praise God and edify persons. To serve that purpose, care must be taken so that music addressed to God and to each other is of suitable quality in both form and substance. The Bible itself gives us the forms our music is to take: psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Campbell's "Address to the Disciples" both echoes his teaching in the 1828 hymnbook and gives more specific meaning to Scott's very general criteria. No psalmody, no matter how beautiful, is to be used which is not in accordance with the letter and spirit of Christian teaching.

More interesting are those comments in the introduction which convey, if not exactly a revision of Campbell's views, at least an evolving of his criteria for creating a hymnbook. Previous comments related to music were negative. They warned of subordinating the content of the text to the less substantial sentiments of music. Campbell, in this writing, affirms the importance of the tune. For singing to fulfill its purposes of bringing comfort and joy to ourselves and others, and for it to convert, the tune must be well chosen. It is to correspond with the meaning of the song and the occasion.

Campbell also begins to move beyond his defensiveness about the small number of selections in his previous work. As a garden is not faulted for not having every flower and shrub, so the hymnal is not to

be faulted if not every song is there, provided every species is represented. Campbell “added to the species” in this hymnal by including a new psalm on the transfiguration.

A major result of Campbell’s efforts, including later revisions, was a common hymnbook which provided worship resources for a united people for thirty years. The initial version of some 250 pages had thirty-two psalms and thirty-five hymns, nineteen fewer than in his 1828 edition. Campbell did extensively expand the number of spiritual songs from thirty-nine in the 1828 version to 179 in the new edition for the recently united Reformers and Christians. Musical aids were limited to identifying meters. An index of first lines was printed in the back. Spiritual songs were organized into thirteen categories, such as “Songs for Christian Children,” “Christian Immersion,” “Bible,” and “Future Glory.”

Across the next thirty years, *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs* underwent numerous revisions. Those revisions consisted primarily of adding hymns to the end of the previous revision.

***A Collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 1839.*** Walter Scott, our most musical founder, presented the church with two hymnals in 1839. In doing so, Scott, Alexander Campbell’s earlier collaborator, aroused Campbell’s displeasure. Scott gives us this account:

Before Brother Campbell went to the south last year (1838), he stereotyped the hymnbook, which we owned between us, without giving me any information of the same. So soon as I learned this I sent for a copy, but the bookseller, failing to send me one, or to answer my letter, I went to work alone to do the best for the brethren in my power. I perceived that with very little more expense the book could be greatly improved without increasing the price. I, therefore, finished it at an expense of my own of \$300 and it certainly is now not excelled by any other hymnbook in the language. Brother Campbell disapproved of my procedure, as I did of his. But we met at Pittsburgh in July last, and agreed that as soon as I had published 5,000 copies of my book, I should then submit it to the inspection of a committee, the brethren approved by us both, and if the book, or any part of it not found in Brother Campbell’s book is not approved, then that which is approved shall be the book of the Reformation; and our names will appear together again on that book; for Brother Campbell would not permit his name to go in the book as I had improved it; so that it has become necessary to issue it with my own name on it.<sup>31</sup>

Why did the church need Scott’s *A Collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*? The “human” factor of Scott’s anger at being left out of the 1838 work of revision seems to have prompted the new hymnal. In addition, there were substantive reasons to answer the question, “why.”

Music had been under-valued and under-cultivated by Disciples. Scott agreed with the sentiment expressed by Silas W. Leonard, his partner in producing a second hymnal in 1839 “...vocal music is or appears to be held in least esteem by those of the reformation.”<sup>32</sup>

Leonard adds his rationale on “why.” Could he have been thinking of the Campbells when he said:

There are some professed christians who stoutly contend, that singing by note, and judgment, and according to system, sounds not so well as singing by air, and memory, and according to fancy.... They would ever [sic] that a regiment moves more easily when some run, some walk, and some stand, some going circuitously, some in a zigzag route, and some in direct procession, but we are inclined to think, that when all sing according to the same rule and the same time, each moves more easily.<sup>33</sup>

Scott supported his case in the preface published in both hymnals of 1839.

There are some strong reasons why christians should cultivate Sacred Music. First, — Music is a Science; that is, it has its foundation in nature; or like all natural science, it has God for its author. Second, — It is commanded us to sing. The Holy Spirit enjoins on us to “sing and make melody” — a thing which cannot be done without some knowledge of music. Third, — It is the office of a hymn to arouse impassioned devotional feeling, even as it is the office of teaching to illuminate understanding. Of all the manners and customs in the Kingdom of Christ, therefore, singing most interests the feelings and affections of the heart, and it is due to the aged for their comfort, and still more to the youth for their encouragement and preservation in the Faith that Sacred Music be cultivated with extraordinary care among us.<sup>34</sup>

Scott pursued his purpose of better singing congregations by putting musical aids in his hymnbooks.

That the brethren may not be compelled to rely for music on the scanty resources of their own memory merely, the music of *MASON'S SACRED HARP* has been set to the HymnBook; so that to obtain tunes it is only necessary for the brethren to possess themselves of that incomparable work. It is the peculiar felicity of the disciples of Christ to be left free to carry all parts of Christian worship to perfection in regard to “decency and order.” We pray, therefore, that those for whom this selection is intended, may zealously devote themselves to the cultivation of the praises of God, and so may the Holy Spirit be in them.<sup>35</sup>

Scott's emphasis on music did not turn him completely away from emendations of hymn texts. He added this postscript to his introduction to the hymnal:

P.S. — A few old hymns which associate themselves with our earliest and most devout recollections, and which are remarkable for their nervous diction, have been corrected and inserted; but we could not bear to stereotype weakness or enthusiasm. There must be strength, feeling, and progression of thought in a hymn.<sup>36</sup>

*A Collection of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* contains 672 hymns on 384 pages. Scott identifies a recommended tune for each text in his hymnal. He even cites the page number of that tune in *Sacred Harp*.

The hymnbook is arranged to follow the order of service: “Before the service,” “Before and after teaching,” “Before the Lord's Supper.” One of Scott's sub-groupings is according to his famous “five finger” exercise: “Faith, Repentance, Baptism, Remission of Sins, The Holy Spirit and Eternal Life.” The only index is of first lines.

Later that year, Scott worked with Silas W. Leonard to expand his earlier work. Their joint venture was titled *Christian Psalms and Hymns*. For Leonard, faithfulness to the ancient order of things was to do as the apostles did by making up and singing a suitable and pleasing variety of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Leonard commented in his introduction that we “fulfill the apostolic law touching singing” by teaching one another with “a great variety of hymns suited to a great variety of tunes.”<sup>37</sup> Leonard contributed to the hymnal by increasing the number of hymns to 700, embracing fifty-two varieties of meter. He also gave a short lesson on musical meter.

The founders of the Stone-Campbell movement were a mixture in regard to their musical backgrounds and gifts. They shared a common vision of a healed and whole church, a vision of unity. The irony of their first efforts at creating hymnals was the conflicts they frequently produced. Like music itself, their attempts to generate and express unity was an interesting interplay between discord and resolution.

### **Reverberations - The 1820s and 1830s to the 1990s**

Now in 1995 the old questions of why and what reverberate again. We Disciples are picking up our new hymnbook, *Chalice Hymnal*. We are considering it, debating it. Many are choosing it and becoming acquainted with it. What does our heritage of early hymnal-making teach us to expect?

We can expect the “why” questions to be raised as they were at the General Assembly in 1987. The Assembly affirmed the following rationale for a new hymnal:

WHEREAS, music plays a vital role in Christian worship, giving expression to ideas and feelings not expressible through the medium of speech, and

WHEREAS, joining together in song provides an opportunity for the congregation to participate actively in worship and to express the unity of the people of God, and

WHEREAS, the church needs hymns and other worship resources which express the hopes, joys, concerns and beliefs of people of all ages who are seeking to live as Christians in the 1980s, 1990s, and into the twenty-first century, and

WHEREAS, the current *Hymnbook for Christian Worship* was published in 1970 and is outdated in terms of:

- contemporary hymns, modern spiritual songs, traditional and contemporary gospel songs and hymns;
- inclusive language;
- current church teaching and emphases;
- ethnic and cultural diversities;
- broad theological expressions, reflecting the diversity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)...

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly...requests the General Minister and President to initiate the process of establishing a hymnal revision committee and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee's goal will be to compile a hymnbook for Disciples which reflects the faith and religious experience of the diverse membership of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), (No. 8737).

Notice that the rationale affirmed by the Assembly is based on enriching the worship of God, overcoming obsolescence and identifying the hymnal as a sign and resource to express unity within the diversity of our church.

The "what" questions also echo again from 160 years ago. What can we expect as we examine the new hymnal? What is in this hymnal which will meet our needs in worshipping God?

We can expect new music and hymn texts created by Disciples. No ecumenical partners were found to share in developing *Chalice Hymnal*. There are more pages on which our tradition of hymn writing will re-echo. Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone contributed their own texts which were enjoyed by the congregations for a generation or two. Disciples have yet to produce an Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley or Fanny Crosby. Could this be our moment?

We can expect emendations of hymn texts. Campbell asserted, "We have used our pen pretty liberally..." The description also fits Stone and Scott. *Chalice Hymnal* echoes with the precedent of the Disciples' founders. This edition focuses on justice and inclusion of ethnic minorities and women. Most archaisms have been removed.

We can expect conflict. The giants of our movement didn't avoid conflict. *Chalice Hymnal* will also generate varied responses on the decisions made in creating one hymnal for a very diverse people.

*Chalice Hymnal* is the latest in a history of Disciples hymnbooks which seeks to bring harmony to a diverse church. As we consider and debate *Chalice Hymnal* we would do well to heed the Apostle Paul's writing on harmony and diversity.

A musical paraphrase:

Music does not consist of one note but many. For in one Spirit we were baptized into one congregation singing God's praise... If G sharp says to B flat, "Because I am not B flat, I am not part of the music," would that make it any less a part of the singing? As it is, God arranged the notes, the rests, the accidentals, the composers, the writers, the gospel-chorus singers, the oratorio singers, the high churches, the low churches, the conservatives and the liberals into one choir... If we sing with the tongues of mortals and angels, but do not have love, we are noisy gongs and clanging cymbals. (2 Cor. 12:14, 15, 18, 13:1)

Reverberating across the history of Disciples' hymnbooks is the persistent pursuit of a musically diverse people seeking harmony in their praise of God.

## DISCIPLES HYMNBOOKS<sup>3</sup>

### ANTECEDENTS

- 1805 *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of Christians*. Elias Smith, Vermont.
- 1814 *Hymns, Original and Selected, for the Use of Christians*. Elias Smith and Abner Jones, Philadelphia.
- 1816 *Hymns and Spiritual Songs, Designed for the Use of Christians*. James O'Kelly, Raleigh.
- 1818 *A Selection of Christian Hymns*. Rice Haggard, Lexington, Kentucky.
- 1824 *Christian Hymns*. Robert Foster, New Hampshire.

### 19TH CENTURY STONE-CAMPBELL MOVEMENT

- 1828 *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs: Adapted to the Christian Religion*. Alexander Campbell, Bethany, (West) Virginia.
- 1829 *The Christian Hymn Book*. Thomas Adams and Barton W. Stone, Georgetown, Kentucky.
- 1832 *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs: Adapted to the Christian Religion*. Third edition. Alexander Campbell, Bethany, (West) Virginia.  
*The Christian Hymn Book*. John T. Johnson and Barton W. Stone, Georgetown, Kentucky.
- 1834 *An Introduction to Sacred Music*. Amos Suttan Hayden. This was a tune book "adapted to" the current version of *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*.  
*Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. Alexander Campbell, John T. Johnson, Walter Scott, and Barton W. Stone. This represented an attempt to provide a single hymn collection for the use of the united forces of Campbell and Stone.
- 1839 *A Collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. Walter Scott, Cincinnati. This was Scott's version of the Campbell-Johnson-Scott-Stone book, with tunes recommended from the *Sacred Harp*.  
*Christian Psalms and Hymns*. Walter Scott and Silas W. Leonard. Louisville. 1843  
*Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, Original and Selected, Adapted to the Christian Religion*. Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton Stone, John T. Johnson. Bethany, (West) Virginia.
- 1847 *The Christian Psalmist*. Silas W. Leonard and Augustus D. Fillmore. Louisville, Kentucky.
- 1853 *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, Original and Selected, Adapted to the Christian Religion*. Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton W. Stone, John T. Johnson,

- Bethany, (West) Virginia.
- 1865 ***The Christian Hymn Book. A Compilation of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Original and Selected.*** Alexander Campbell, Isaac Errett, W.K. Pendleton, W.T. Moore, T.M. Allen, A.S. Hayden. Cincinnati. This was the successor to Campbell's 1828 book, now published and revised by a committee of the American Christian Missionary Society, Isaac Errett, chairman.
- 1870 ***Christian Hymn and Tune Book.*** Amos S. Hayden. Chicago. The first hymn and tune book based directly on a hymnbook of our church.
- 1871 ***Christian Hymnal.*** Cincinnati. The first official hymn and tune book of the Disciples — a revision of the 1865 *Christian Hymn Book* with music added.
- 1882 ***Christian Hymnal: Revised.*** A.I. Hobbs and others, editors of the hymns; J.H. Fillmore and others, editors of the music, Cincinnati. The last direct volume based on Campbell's 1828 hymnbook.
- New Christian Hymn and Tune Book.*** James H. Fillmore, Cincinnati.
- 1887 ***New Christian Hymn and Tune Book.*** James H. Fillmore, Cincinnati. A new feature of the layout of these gospel songs in Part III is that the words of all stanzas appear printed between the staves.
- 1896 ***The Praise Hymnal.*** The Fillmore brothers.

## **20TH CENTURY DISCIPLES OF CHRIST**

- 1905 ***Gloria in Excelsis.*** Hackleman Music Company of Indianapolis and Christian Publishing Company of St. Louis. Combined standard hymns with gospel songs and included a generous number of items by Disciples but with little carry-over from the early days of the movement. Only 34 texts from the main body of *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1832) were retained.
- 1906 ***The New Praise Hymnal.*** The Fillmore brothers. A revised and enlarged edition of the 1896 hymnal.
- 1919 ***Hymns of the United Church.*** Published by Willett, Clark and Company, Chicago and New York, under editorship of Charles Clayton Morrison and Herbert E. Willett. Was rather widely used by churches in several denominations to whom its emphasis on the "social gospel" was congenial. It aimed at being an ecumenical collection, and gave small place to Disciples writers.
- 1925 ***Hymns of Praise, Number Two.*** Hope publication compiled by F.G. Kingsbury and Wallace Tuttle and called "The Bethany Edition." Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis.
- 1927 ***American Church and Church School Hymnal.*** W.E.M. Hackleman and Edwin O. Excell, E.O. Excell Company, Chicago. A special version of this book was printed by the Disciples'

Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis. It represents an attempt to provide a collection for use both in Sunday School and the regular church service.

- 1941** *Christian Worship, A Hymnal*. Published jointly by the Disciples and the American Baptists. Christian Board of Publication and Judson Press.
- 1966** *Hymns and Songs of the Spirit*. Published jointly by the Disciples and the American Baptists for use at informal situations. Christian Board of Publication and Judson Press.
- 1945** *Christian Hymns*. E. Wayne Berry and Clementine Miller Tangeman. Published under the sponsorship of the Christian Foundation of Columbus, Indiana.
- 1970** *Hymnbook for Christian Worship*. Charles Huddleston Heaton, editor; John Paul Pack, chairman, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); and Edward Hughes Pruden, chairman, American Baptist Convention. Christian Board of Publication and Judson Press.
- 1995** *Chalice Hymnal*. Chalice Press.

<sup>§</sup>Based on an unpublished compilation by Colbert S. Cartwright

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Hymnal Development Committee, minutes and personal notes, May 6, 1991, (unpublished).

<sup>2</sup>J.S. Lamar, *Memoirs of Isaac Errett*, (Cincinnati, Standard Publishing Company, 1893), II, p. 25f., Footnote.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Campbell, "Essay on the Religion of Christianity," *The Christian Baptist*, edited by Alexander Campbell, revised by D.S. Burnett, (St. Louis, Christian Publishing Company, 1889). p.99.

<sup>4</sup>Colbert S. Cartwright, *Candles of Grace: Disciples Worship in Perspective*, (St. Louis, Chalice Press, 1992), pp. 17, 18.

<sup>5</sup>Selina Huntington Campbell, *Home Life and Reminiscences of Alexander Campbell*, (St. Louis, John Burns, 1882), p. 500.

<sup>6</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Order of the Church as Respects Worship," *The Millennial Harbinger*, Extra, VI, 8, (1835), p.508.

<sup>7</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Ordinances," *The Millennial Harbinger*, (January, 1843), p.9.

<sup>8</sup>Royal Humbert, "Alexander Campbell Edits a Hymnal," *The Christian Evangelist*, (December 31, 1936), p. 1696.

<sup>9</sup>David L. Edwards, "When You Do This, Remember Me," *Chalice Hymnal, Sampler*, (St. Louis, Chalice Press, 1993), #26.

<sup>10</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Psalmody," *The Millennial Harbinger*, (March, 1843), p.131.

<sup>11</sup>Barton W. Stone, "Singing," *The Christian Messenger*, (August, 1832), p. 253.

<sup>12</sup>Barton W. Stone, *The Biography of Eld. Barton Warren Stone*, (Cincinnati, J.A. and U.P. James), 1847, p. 316.

<sup>13</sup>Rhodes Thompson, *Voices From Cane Ridge*, (St. Louis, Bethany, 1954), p. 37.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p.48.

<sup>15</sup>Charles Crossfield Ware, *Barton Warren Stone: Pathfinder of Christian Union*, (St. Louis, Bethany, 1932), p. 318.

<sup>16</sup>William Baxter, *Life of Elder Walter Scott*, (St. Louis, Bethany, 1926), p.162.

<sup>17</sup>Walter Scott, *Christian Psalms and Hymns*, (Louisville, J. Maxwell, Jr., 1839), p.v.

<sup>18</sup>Walter Scott, "Sacred Music," *The Evangelist*, (December 1, 1839), p. 265.

<sup>19</sup>Walter Scott, "Sacred Music," *The Evangelist*, (August 1, 1839), p. 191.

<sup>20</sup>George Brandon, "Hymnody of the Disciples of Christ in the U.S.A.," *The Hymn*, (January, 1964), p. 17.

<sup>21</sup>Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1870), ii, p. 180.

<sup>22</sup>Alexander Campbell, *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, (Bethany, Virginia, 1828), pp. iv, v.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xvi.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xxi.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. viii.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. xxii, xxiii.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xxii.

<sup>28</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs," *The Christian Baptist*, (April 7, 1828), p. 215.

<sup>29</sup>Walter Scott, "Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs," *The Millennial Harbinger*, (May, 1834), p. 239.

<sup>30</sup>Barton W. Stone, "Answer to Bro. Thomas Carr's Letter," *The Christian Messenger*, (October, 1835), pp. 227,228.

<sup>31</sup>Walter Scott, "Our Hymn Book Improved," *The Evangelist*, (August 1, 1839), p. 192.

<sup>32</sup>S. W. Leonard, "Sacred Music," *The Evangelist*, (August 1, 1838), p. 186.

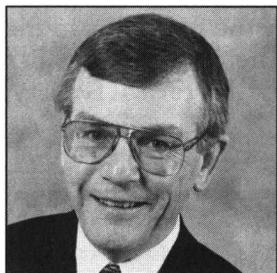
<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>34</sup>Walter Scott, *Christian Psalms and Hymns*, (Louisville, J. Maxwell, Jr., 1839), pp. v, vi.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. vi.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. vi.

<sup>37</sup>Silas W. Leonard, "Introduction," in Walter Scott's *Christian Psalms and Hymns*, p.iii.



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Peter M. Morgan  
Named  
President Elect  
Disciples of Christ Historical Society

The Board of Trustees of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society at its May 7 and 8, 1995 meeting named Peter M. Morgan to become President of Disciples of Christ Historical Society on January 1, 1996. Morgan will actually join the staff December 1, 1995.

Having delivered the first Forrest H. Kirkpatrick lecture for the Historical Society in 1992, Morgan is very familiar with Stone-Campbell history. He is a graduate of Lexington Theological Seminary, where he majored in church history. His undergraduate work was done at Bethany College.

Currently Morgan is serving on the staff of the Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). His specific area of work is in worship and renewal. He has spoken widely across the church. He is author of the books *Disciples Eldership: A Quest for Identity and Ministry* and *Story Weaving*.

Peter Morgan was born in New York City in 1939. He is married to the former Lynne Rollins of Wheeling, West Virginia. His roots in the Stone-Campbell Movement are deep. He is the grandson of E. E. Manley and great nephew of Roy G. Manley, both Disciples ministers.

## ***Just As I Lived It***

*by Lester G. McAllister*

(Recalling events occurring during a 70-plus year fellowship in the Stone-Campbell movement)

The time was 1965 near the close of the Second Vatican Council. As a gesture of goodwill the Vatican had sent the World Convention of Churches of Christ a beautiful, tall (5 foot high) papal candle made of pure beeswax and decorated with the papal seal. A decision was made to send it to San Juan, Puerto Rico to be used in a worship service at a session of the World Convention to be held that summer.

For some reason I was put in charge of the candle. When local leaders heard of the candle, and its possible use, there was consternation. Many of the worshippers that evening would be Puerto Ricans who had left their membership in the Roman Catholic church, sometimes at great personal cost. They would likely be offended at the use of the papal candle. It was suggested that I make the candle disappear!

On the evening the candle was to be used it was nowhere to be found. The service went forward without it. However, before the convention was over the candle was discovered hidden under the bleachers in the ball park where our large outdoor gatherings were held. Today it resides peacefully in the archive of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, and may be seen there.

### **PAULSELL TO SPEAK AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY DINNER**

Dr. William O. Paulsell will speak on "Disciples at Prayer" at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society Dinner. This dinner will be at the Lawrence Convention Center on Tuesday, October 24, 1995 in Pittsburg, PA in connection with the General Assembly. The time is 5:30 p.m. Please use the order blank to order your tickets. These will be sent to you in advance if time permits.

-----  
Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at \$15.00 per ticket for the Disciples of Christ Historical Society Dinner on Tuesday, Oct. 24, 1995 in Pittsburg, PA. My check is enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Restoration Literature MetaIndex on World Wide Web**

The Internet makes it possible to log into the Online Public Access Catalog of a number of institutions affiliated with the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement (Abilene Christian University, Butler University, David Lipscomb University, Drake University, Texas Christian University). These schools and electronic versions of several S-CRM documents, subject bibliographies, and a S-CRM Portrait Gallery can be accessed by means of a World Wide Web document called the Restoration Literature Metaindex compiled by Jim McMillan. Accessing this document requires a World Wide Web browser such as Lynx, MacWeb, Mosaic, Netscape, or WinWeb. The MetaIndex's Internet Address, its Uniform Resource Locator, or URL, must be entered exactly as follows, including punctuation and lower and upper case letters:

<http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~mcmillan/Restlit/rindx.html>

Another similar site is maintained by Hans Rollman at the Memorial University of Newfoundland:

<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~hrollman/rels.html>

## **Restoration Serials Index Online**

S-CRM researchers will be pleased to know that the *Restorations Serials Index* can be searched electronically by telnetting to *bible.acu.edu* and typing "RSI" at the Username prompt. Online service users can search by using FTP to go to *bible.acu.edu* and typing "GUEST" at the username prompt, and then selecting the "Library" option from the menu. Then select the "RSI" option. The ACU site can be also accessed by World Wide Web (<http://www.bible.acu.edu>). For help E-mail Systems Manager Tom Dolan at [dolan@bible.acu.edu](mailto:dolan@bible.acu.edu) or phone 915-674-3706 or fax 915-674-3776.

## **Stone-Campbell Online Discussion Groups**

DOCDISC (short for "Disciples of Christ Discussion Group") is a public access list devoted to discussions about contemporary issues facing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). A wide variety of topics is acceptable for discussion, including such issues as the continuing discussions between the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, the Christian Church's (Disciples of Christ) role in ecumenicism (both historically and currently), Disciples Renewal, the relationship between the Disciples and the other segments of the S-CRM (the Independent Christian Churches and the Noninstrumental Churches of Christ), doctrinal issues and any other issues of interest to list subscribers.

To subscribe to the list address an E-mail message to [majordomo@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu](mailto:majordomo@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu). In the body of the message type *subscribe docdisc*. Your message should contain this message and NOTHING else. Subscription requests are handled by computer software and anything extra in the message will cause the software to reject the request. Jim McMillan (E-mail: [mcmillan@alexia.lis.uiuc.edu](mailto:mcmillan@alexia.lis.uiuc.edu)), minister of the First Christian Church of Newman, Illinois, and a graduate student in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is the list administrator.

S-CRM files are also area hosted by the College of Biblical and Family Studies Information Service at Abilene Christian University. To subscribe to the Stone-Campbell list, send an E-mail message to [listserv@bible.acu.edu](mailto:listserv@bible.acu.edu). On the first line of the message text put *Subscribe Stone-Campbell yourfirstname yourlastname*. Any list member can access files and post files to be archived at this site as well as join in on-going discussions.

Online discussion groups of interest to S-CRM researchers are also available at Disciplenet on Ecunet; and Disciples, Christian Churches, and Churches of Christ areas can be accessed by an America Online keyword search.

# DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the  
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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“From Anglo-American Tradition  
to a Multicultural World”

Third Annual Forrest H. Kirkpatrick Seminar  
for Stone-Campbell Historians

May 3-4, 1996  
Nashville, Tennessee

Lecturers  
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#### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Disciples of Christ Historical Society was established in 1941 "to maintain and further interest in religious heritage, backgrounds, origins, development, and general history of Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ and related groups."

Members of the Society receive *DISCIPLIANA* quarterly, along with other benefits. Annual membership categories are: Sustaining - \$50 to \$249, Participating - \$25 to \$49, Regular - \$15, Students - \$7.50, Canadian and Overseas - \$20. Single payment Life Memberships are: Life - \$250, Life Link - \$500, Life Patron - \$1,000.

Contributors should submit manuscripts on 3.5 floppy disk in Wordperfect 5.1 or "text" format. Electronic manuscript submission via "text only" formatted e-mail or attached file accepted at DisHistSoc@aol.com.

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## *—From the Editor's Desk*

This issue offers something to challenge, if not shock or offend nearly every reader.

The articles by Byron C. Lambert and Brenda E. Brasher were first presented to the Second Annual Forrest H. Kirkpatrick Seminar for Stone-Campbell Historians, held in Nashville, May 5-6, 1995. The third paper presented at the seminar (also likely to challenge, if not shock or offend some readers) will appear in the Winter issue. The general theme of the three-year inaugural series of Kirkpatrick seminars is "How Does a Nineteenth Century North American Religious Movement Face the Twenty-First Century?" The specific theme of the 1995 seminar was "From Rural Churches to an Urban World."

Lambert's "Shifting Frontiers and the Invisible Hand" is a study of the organization that has developed among the independent Christian Church and Churches of Christ in the context of twentieth century demographic and cultural developments. Disciples who invested much in the 1960s in the restructure of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and independents such as Henry E. Webb who recently lamented that radical autonomy is "our peculiar dogma" may be chagrined, at the very least, by Lambert's argument that radical autonomy has been the key to the development of an organizational scheme particularly suited to late twentieth-century North America.

Brasher's "The Christian Church (Disciple of Christ) into the Third Millennium" also looks at twentieth century demographic and cultural developments, noting that it may be fruitful to discuss Disciples restructure in terms of its dissonance with late twentieth century cultural trends! However, Brasher's concern is not so much denominational organization, as ways that congregations of the Stone-Campbell tradition may respond to their changing demographic and cultural circumstances. Indeed, she seems to see a role for denominational programs and even denominational social pronouncements in the revitalization of congregations. What will raise some eyebrows is the particular programs and pronouncements and the particular congregation she selects as an example of renewal in a specific demographic and cultural environment.

Finally, Lester McAllister's "Just as I Lived It" will take your breath away. It describes the relation of Stone-Campbell families to events in the 1920s which we can only wish had never happened and to which some readers might prefer to believe the Stone-Campbell movement was not related.

But, do read on! The overarching theme of the issue is how North American Christians have responded to twentieth-century demographic and cultural developments. This is an important theme for the church's reflection as it seeks to make the Christian witness on the eve of the twenty-first century.

## — *From the President's Desk*

The time has come to report to you concerning the Encyclopedic Dictionary project of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. A number of you made or are making contributions to this project. Several very significant gifts were made. The three primary editors—Anthony Dunnivant, Paul Blowers, and Douglas Foster—have recently concluded a two day planning meeting in Nashville. Plans are definitely moving forward on the project but at a slower pace.

The dream was to produce a solid, comprehensive, reference work of the highest quality, both in contents and physical presentation. As the plans are developing the dream has also come to include the production of a book of such value that it would find its way into the research libraries of colleges, universities and seminaries and into libraries of congregations and individual members of the Stone-Campbell tradition.

*The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* is being sponsored and published by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. Additionally, the center for Restoration Studies of Abilene Christian Univeristy has pledged its support to this project.

In addition to the three general editors an editorial board of associate editors has been selected. This board will be assisted and their work reviewed by a distinguished panel of senior editorial consultants. On the editorial board with the 3 general editors there will be 19 historians and other representatives of the three branches of the Stone-Campbell heritage. There are 18 persons serving as senior editorial consultants.

The general editors and members of the editorial board met in late 1993 at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and in 1994 at the First Annual Kirkpatrick Stone-Campbell Movement Historians Seminar. The editors and board have begun the process of shaping the interpretive philosophy of and approach to *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*.

The general editors have met several times since 1993. The editorial board has been polled for their responses to a proposed list of *Encyclopedia* entries. This survey, which consisted of approximately fifty pages in double columns, yielded massive data that will more definitively shape the book. Paramaters have been set for material to be contained in the volume. The general editors now project the following plan:

FOR THE REMAINDER OF 1995: complete the analysis of the entries survey and begin to make specific article assignments.

FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1996: make the article assignments and initiate the process of writing.

FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1997: complete, receive, review all contents for *Encyclopedia*.

FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1998: edit copy and complete the physical production/printing of the volume.

Have *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* ready for distribution by the middle of 1999!

This is indeed a big undertaking but it is in good hands. The product will be one of which all of us can be proud. I am glad I had a small part in the initiation of the idea.

# **From Rural Churches to an Urban World: Shifting Fronterers and the Invisible Hand**

by Byron C. Lambert\*

## 1. The Country Goes to the City

Here he was, a Pennsylvania farm boy in New York City's Union Square, pulling a miniature chapel-on-wheels behind his car, with tiny Gothic windows, a little bell in a steeple, with a place at the rear for a push-out pulpit and loudspeakers, to preach to the cynics of lower Manhattan. Jaded passersby had seen everything at the Square in their time. But this?

Back at Johnson Bible College, Elmer Kile had met a Russian-Polish missionary who had preached to some Slavs in the New York area, and he wondered whether he could ever join such a ministry. Later, after graduating from Manhattan Bible College, in Kansas, he had taken pulpits in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Still, he felt the call of the city. One day, in 1943, he packed his family into a house trailer and went looking for the Slavic missionary who had excited his imagination back in college. He parked in East Orange, New Jersey, at the house of a preacher who had once served his home church in Greenwood, Pennsylvania, then went looking for the missionary. He discovered there was no Slavic mission in the city! Disappointed, he found part time preaching at the struggling Greenpoint, Brooklyn, congregation while he took a job and his wife opened a greeting card store across the river in Jersey City.

At the time, New York City and its suburbs numbered fifteen million people with seventy different nationalities. The tiny Greenpoint church was walled around by religious communities that were sixty percent Catholic, fifteen to twenty percent Jewish, and twenty percent everything else. He found serving the Greenpoint congregation frustrating: he couldn't get anyone except those who were already members to darken the door. Thus was born the idea of the mobile chapel. Kile would "Go" as Matthew 28:19 directed and find disciples in the city around him.

By the time he died of a heart attack at the age of fifty-eight, twenty years after he had built his first "Go Ye Chapel," Kile had established an urban evangelistic association, a Christian service camp in the Catskills, and sixteen "New Testament" congregations in the metropolitan area from Connecticut to Pennsylvania. He was not a talented speaker, he was not a scholar, he had no charisma. How had he done it? Dogged loyalty to his mission, working seven days a week from 5:30 a.m. to midnight, borrowing for church buildings in his own name, going in arrears in pay for months at a time, and saying to his city-wise trustees when they told him he could not start a church in a certain locality, "God will give the increase."<sup>1</sup>

I choose this story as a prototype of what was called at the time "independency"<sup>2</sup> and what gave birth to the fellowship of Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. While the roots of independency go

back to the early 1920s, it was around 1950 that the movement began to emerge. A protest convention had long since been set up among conservative Disciples;<sup>3</sup> one of the two leading journals was calling for a break with the United Christian Missionary Society and its liberal leadership;<sup>4</sup> new Bible colleges and evangelistic associations were being started to train preachers and build churches “loyal to the Plea”; and congregations were being told to send missionaries to the field on a direct support basis alone. The fact was, when Kile arrived in New York City, Christian Churches were already there, and one since 1810.<sup>5</sup> Kyle, however, recognized no kinship to any but a church in Maspeth, Queens, and two New Jersey congregations.<sup>6</sup> For him the liberal, open-membership churches did not exist. Nor, equally, did Kile exist for them. Kile’s move to the city was his own decision, not that of a board; he came as a religious immigrant to a “denominational” wilderness. His own larger brotherhood, upon whom in an earlier age he might have drawn for support, had vanished.

Kile soon found he was not going to buy property in the city to start a church, where land was thousands of dollars per square foot, and he learned also that large numbers of those people most likely to be his best prospects were moving to the suburbs of Long Island and New Jersey. He decided to “Go” where the people who would listen to him were moving. But now he would need broad support—contributions from independent-minded people outside the area and a board of advisers from the city area itself. In 1945, the “Go Ye Chapel Mission” was organized. Ironically, Kyle was now discovering where that protean thing called a “city” was. Without sophistication (but not without Guidance?) he was extending the Mission where vital city life, not just in New York, but in every metropolitan area in the country, was expanding, that exploding rim of replaced industries, bedrooms, malls, and commercial parks away from the central cities which some call “Superburbia,” or “Edge City.”<sup>7</sup>

What used to be thought of as a “city”—a huge downtown made up of shops and skyscrapers, to which people commuted by railway and bus by the hundreds of thousands—a visible, experienceable unity—was beginning to disappear in the 1950s. Unquestionably Kile thought he was coming to this in 1943. By the time he was well into his mission this kind of civic entity was in dissolution. Joel Garreau documents these changes in his *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*, in which he shows that Americans, in the past four decades, have been going through the most radical changes in their living arrangements in a century, without really knowing what has been happening to them. The real city, he points out, meets none of our outdated ideas of a city: there are no downtowns anymore; corporation limits no longer match neighborhoods and are largely invisible; the new population centers go in every direction, tied together only “by freeways, jetways, and jogging paths.”<sup>8</sup> These new edge cities contain eighty percent of all the office space in America. Some edge cities can cover more than 10,000 square miles:<sup>9</sup> San Francisco stretches halfway across northern California. New York and

Chicago both stretch into three states. All of these urban spreads, Garreau argues, are based on the invincible American notion that every problem has a solution. Americans, he says, have from their beginnings tried to marry the machine to the garden, and thus have the best of both city and country life, a kind of "In-Between" hearth city, a "mesoburb."<sup>10</sup>

It is not surprising to read John N. Vaughan's *Megachurches and America's Cities* and find most of the one hundred largest churches in America with worship attendance from 2000 to 10,000 located in these mesoburbs.<sup>11</sup> A few megachurches are ethnic and center-city; nevertheless, especially among evangelicals, the megachurches circle the cities, out where more mobile Americans live, shop, and can find parking on their religious "campuses."<sup>12</sup>

Early on, as the call to recover "restorationism" was made, not just Kile, but church planters in all the independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ (hereafter ICCs) were catching on to what was happening. More recently, thoroughly steeped in church growth principles, the rapidly multiplying evangelistic associations have learned, like Kile, to throw nets where the fish are. The Chicago District Evangelistic Association, for example, the first "independent" church-planting agency (1922), and begun under very different leadership than that of Kile's "Go Ye" work, illustrates the increasing sophistication demanded in church planting. Using mass- and tele-marketing along with the new "team approach" to church planting, the CDEA has started sixty-seven churches in the Chicago area since 1950.<sup>13</sup> Another region of rapid ICC planting has been the Southeast. In 1950, there were only eighteen congregations in Florida; today that number is over two hundred. The first efforts were made by another pioneer like Kile, Guy Leavitt, retired editor of Standard's *Lookout*, who took it upon himself to start a church in Daytona, then to create a state church paper, the *Christian Progress*, and after that the Florida Christian Convention, the latter two serving as the driving force behind the founding of both Florida Christian College and the Church Development Fund of that state.<sup>14</sup> Today six regional fellowships cooperate in running church camps and other parachurch ministries along with church planting. Standard Publishing's *Fact Finder 1994* lists seventy-three ICC church planting agencies across the nation, although there are probably over one hundred. Some of the larger congregations, like E. 91st Street Church, Indianapolis, have "mothered" new congregations, not just in their own vicinity, but across the United States, and even overseas.<sup>15</sup> A close look at where these new and growing churches are, suggests that not only is the edge city factor at work in the result, but quite obviously is the switch of populations from the old "fertile crescent" of the Stone-Campbell movement to the Sunbelt states.

Not only are individual associations at work from section to section, but more recently neighboring associations have combined to start churches. Paul Williams, director of New York's GYCM, has with leaders of five other eastern agencies forged a second-tier cooperative venture in the northeast called Northeast Church Planting Associates

to put a church in Nashua, New Hampshire, just north of Boston.<sup>16</sup>

Over one thousand agencies of all kinds, from colleges and campus ministries to retirement villages and benevolent homes, with a staggering variety of ministries in between, now serve the ICCs. Most of these are area-centered, or at most regional ventures. Nevertheless, there is one which belies the notion that independents cannot do anything together at the national level: the North American Christian Convention. Begun as a split off the International Convention of the Disciples in 1928 and meeting irregularly until the 1940s, the NACC has become one of the largest religious gatherings in America, with a four-day mass meeting of 60,000 registrants, attending preaching/worship sessions, workshops, forums, banquets, and special assemblies for teens and children. Brought to organizational efficiency by Leonard Wymore, who was hired as its first permanent director in 1963,<sup>17</sup> the convention, while it moves to different cities for its annual gatherings, now owns a permanent office in Cincinnati. Virtually every agency serving the churches and every theological slant in both pulpit and classroom put their differences aside for a few days to make a national statement. Because the working committees are careful to let every segment of the fellowship be represented on the platforms, in the workshops, and in the theological forum, the convention has a unitive effect that overcomes whatever fears there may be of creating a “headquarters.”

Less known, but even more spectacular on the world scene, is the overseas missionary effort of ICC's. In the last fifty years the number of ICC missionaries has grown from just over one hundred to twelve hundred.<sup>18</sup> Originally idealizing the direct-support approach, independents today are organized in a wide array of organizational patterns and located in eighty-three countries of the world. The most systematized of these groups is the Christian Missionary Fellowship, of Indianapolis, which has now 117 missionaries among eleven people groups in ten countries.<sup>19</sup> Reliable statistics are hard to come by, but a recent survey conducted by the Missions Resource Center, of Cincinnati, shows 7300 ICCs, 2600 “preaching points,” and 1,020,000 converts in the mission fields—with only one-third response to the census mailing!<sup>20</sup> How many churches and members there may actually be can only be guessed. There are now nearly 9000 “national preachers” assisting the missionaries, and some are now working in countries outside their own where Americans cannot go.<sup>21</sup> Although Mission Services Association, of Knoxville, TN, publishes a monthly magazine and offers a resource center to both missionaries and churches, what is urgently needed is a worldwide Directory of Missions.

With such phenomenal and complicated development at home and overseas, is “Independent” the right adjective for this side of the Stone-Campbell movement?

## 2. The City Comes to the Country

Dean E. Walker (1898-1988) came to Milligan College, in east Tennessee, as its president in 1950 after leaving his post as professor of church history at Butler University's School of Religion, in Indianapolis. The most gifted and theologically conservative of the teachers there, he had built a reputation among students as the creative alternative voice to the dominant liberalism of Disciple schools of the time, and many hated to see him give up an influential classroom to become an administrator of a weak school distant from the center of brotherhood life. Nevertheless he came, bringing with him the idea of a liberal arts curriculum built around Scripture, much like that followed by Alexander Campbell.<sup>22</sup>

He believed the older Disciple colleges had lost their purpose and that the Bible colleges, while providing a type of ministerial education, were incapable of meeting the need of Christian leadership in the twentieth century. East Tennessee was by no means an impoverished area, although thought of as real hill country, but Milligan had almost gone out of existence during the Second World War, lacked regional accreditation, and was bent under an indebtedness beyond anything its new president had imagined before he came.

He began at once to travel among the churches where he could present his program for a restored Christian college, recruit students, and raise money to pay off the debt. At the same time he was gathering around himself a faculty of young Ph.Ds who could bring status and eventual accreditation to the college, which was received in 1960. New dormitories were built, a spacious multi-purpose chapel was erected, and a library added. Succeeding administrations have added to these achievements, until today Milligan is listed as one of the ten best liberal arts colleges in the south.<sup>23</sup>

As important as the undergraduate college was to Walker's idea of a Bible-centered liberal education, an even deeper commitment underlay his move to Milligan. He had accepted the presidency on the condition that the trustees would be willing, when opportunity came, to offer the facilities of the college in opening a graduate seminary.<sup>24</sup> The model was to be that of Kershner's School of Religion at Butler in the 1930s and '40s.<sup>25</sup> By 1956 Walker was meeting with interested supporters in Indianapolis for a new school, and by 1961 enough momentum had been generated to incorporate what was called Emmanuel School of Religion. By 1965 classes were being held, and in 1974 the school had moved to its own campus and into a spacious building provided by the B. D. Phillips Charitable Trust, of Butler, Pennsylvania.<sup>26</sup> Walker was president of the school until 1969, where he returned to the classroom where he remained almost until his death. Today Emmanuel is the only ICC seminary accredited with the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada.<sup>27</sup> Its faculty, most of whom hold doctorates from prestigious universities worldwide, are active not only in their professional associations, but in the local churches and communities. The school now offers four degree programs, including the doctorate of ministry,<sup>28</sup> and draws students from all over the world. Its 850 alumni

serve Christ in twenty-two nations.

A feature of Emmanuel organization which reveals as much about Walker's influence as anything he did is the two-tiered board structure which he insisted be part of the articles of incorporation. The board of trustees is elected by a "Board of Associates in Christian Education," numbering one hundred men and women who come from supporting churches, not as *representatives* of these congregations, but *representative* of them. The distinction is crucial. The representation is typical, not local and congregational. While the associates are self-perpetuating on a rotating basis, with a broad mix of pulpit and pew, the idea is to keep the school close to the churches and so avoid the drift into academicism and even humanism that has marked so much of mainline seminary education in the twentieth century.<sup>29</sup>

The Milligan and Emmanuel stories are significant, in that their existence has served as a counterbalance to what could have been a decline into fundamentalism among the Bible colleges. Milligan remains the only liberal arts college in the fellowship, but by its presence has stimulated a broadening of the curricula among some Bible colleges and increased respect for accreditation. To some degree, I am convinced, it has been the Walker circle who have accented the sacred character of every calling among Christians, and not just the pulpit ministry, which has prevented the kind of rift between laity and clergy of which Disciples complain.<sup>30</sup>

There is another side of Walker which does not get represented adequately in the recent collection of his writings, and that is his emphasis on the corporate and sacramental aspects of the Christian faith. In this respect, he was close to his friend, William Robinson, of Britain, with whom he had associated while studying for the doctorate at Edinburgh, and whom he encouraged to come to the United States to lecture in 1947. Walker was the only leader I knew among conservatives of the mid-century period who consistently referred to baptism and the Lord's Supper as "sacraments" and who in his classes always spoke of the "catholic" nature of the church. Although he held a high view of Scripture and of the congregation and was a stout defender of freedom of methods in pursuance of the Christian mission,<sup>31</sup> he had a keen sense of the liturgical, even to the manner in which the loaf and the cup were to be presented in the communion.<sup>32</sup> This aspect of his thought has been carried forward by a number of his students and associates at Emmanuel, and is sometimes referred to as "Catholic evangelicalism."<sup>33</sup>

Although there is no causal relation between the growth of Milligan and Emmanuel and the rapid expansion of the tri-cities area of upper east Tennessee into a major commercial/industrial edge city of the United States, it is not without significance that these developments occurred in fortuitous (or providential?) harmony, and that the culture of the churches of that region has taken on an interregional cast under the leadership of a student and faculty ministry drawn from every corner of the United States.

### 3. The Riddle of Independency

Henry Webb, in an address to a breakfast meeting of the European Evangelistic Society during the 1993 North American Christian Convention, spoke of the “peculiar dogma” which has acted like a brake on the cooperative programs of ICCs and prevents them from doing anything on a grand scale, namely, their insistence on the radical autonomy of the local congregation. Says Webb:

“...[J]ust as the Churches of Christ are paying a heavy price to maintain their anti-instrument dogmas, so our distinctive dogmas of radically independent corporate methodology exacts from us a very heavy price.”<sup>34</sup>

He points out where abuses of this principle occur in every aspect of brotherhood life, from overseas missions to duplication of stateside ministries, and notes that even to question the principle puts one in peril of his orthodoxy.<sup>35</sup> He argues convincingly that the dogma reflects not so much unbiased study of scripture but a notion born “out of the flames of conflict without any kind of rational direction.”<sup>36</sup> In other words, autonomy is part of ICC culture.

Dr. Webb's observations are factually accurate, and thereby hangs a riddle. Having created an impressive national convention and spawned a huge cadre of churches overseas, particularly among people of color, and having built hundreds of service associations across the United States, including charitable agencies and outstanding large churches, ICC leaders carry about with them an air of disappointment, even frustration. They cannot see anything being done that reassures them that the mission is on track.

I would like to suggest another look. The fellowship is accomplishing things both nationally and internationally, but it does so obliquely, almost invisibly, and unself-reflectively. What is happening is a combination of passionate motility working at a level of the whole and shrewd intelligence working at the level of the part, something like that operative in small, developing nations. No one likes the confusion, but no one sees how to put it all together without arrogating power to himself he won't allow to others. There are immensely good things happening, not at the level of national vision, but at the more organic levels of emotion and will. The defensiveness of the early years is almost gone, and there is a recovery of an interest in unity, neglected by restorationists of the '40s and '50s. Building on the work of the Church of Christ and Christian Church leaders as Carl Ketcherside, Archie Word, J. D. Murch, Claude Witty, and others of previous generations, the late Don DeWelt, of Ozark Christian College in Missouri, drew a group of friends together in 1984 to reach out to a *cappella* Churches of Christ in a unity forum called “The Restoration Summit.” The first meeting proved to be so encouraging that a second was called under the name “Restoration Forum,” and since then ten forums have been held, the latest, in November, 1994, at Abilene Christianity University, in Texas. Speakers from both groups appear on the programs in equal numbers, and the

messages, while frank and directed to matters at issue between them, are always irenic in spirit.<sup>37</sup> Born out of this unity effort has come an attractive magazine, *One Body*, edited by Victor Knowles, of Joplin, Mo, an early associate of DeWalt. Knowles and his board of directors are all from ICCs, but the writing in the magazine is done by a mix of ICC and Church of Christ people. One reads sentiments and proposals in it that a generation ago would have been unimaginable.<sup>38</sup> One ICC writer repented of the insensitivity he and his forefathers had shown toward a cappella folk, even suggesting that the NACC turn over one of its programs entirely to non-instrumental speakers to show “that we are one in Christ.”<sup>39</sup> Evidence that these meetings are not without effect, some congregations in the two fellowships have been holding occasional joint worship services; and there is one congregation in Normal, IL, which formed an actual merger of the two groups.<sup>40</sup> Unity meetings are also being held in Africa and the Philippines, and there has been one very successful thirteen year joint missionary endeavor.<sup>41</sup>

Another development are the discussions being held between certain leaders of the ICCs and the Church of God (Anderson, IN). Sometime meeting in larger gatherings, but more frequently in smaller seminars called “doctrinal dialogues,” the parlays have been going on since 1989.<sup>42</sup> Issues of common interest in history, theology, and practice are taken with the hope that greater understanding can be arrived at on matters of difference between them. Certain intractable problems continue to surface at the meetings—baptism for the remission of sins held by ICCs, the “experiences” of salvation and sanctification held by the Church of God, what the obligations of practice and belief are with respect to the Lord’s Supper, and what membership in the church means; but both agree that their neglect of unity as “unity” movements is what needs correcting. The meetings are curiously asymmetrical, in that while the Church of God people actually occupy positions of doctrinal authority, ICC people can only represent themselves individually.

It may not seem important, but in the last twenty-five years or so ICCs have been dressing themselves in new kinds of names. In place of the familiar “First Christian,” “Central Christian,” or town name Christian Church, newer churches have been adopting names like “Christ’s Church” *at, in, or of* a certain community. Some have dropped the name *church* for the word *fellowship*, as in “Living Hope Fellowship” or “Countryside Christian Fellowship.” There is “Celebrate Life Christian,” “Saints, Delight Church of Christ,” “Unity for Christ Church,” or just “The *Church* at” such and such a place. “Community Christian” occurs fourteen times in the *Fact-Finder 1994*, “New Testament” Christian or Church of Christ five times, and “Kings Way” three times. “Bible Christian” and “Christ’s Church of the Bible” both appear once, and there is even a “Church of the Lost and Found”! After years of drumming it in that we are a non-denominational fellowship, there may be in all these new names evidence of an attempt to “de-denominate” and further individualize the local congregation at the expense of the larger fellowship. It could also be a case of evangelical drift from the restorationism

of earlier independency. Since a shift in names can often be a clue of deeper changes in a culture, it might be worth pondering what the new names spell for the future.

In spite of the signs of maturity and mellowing. ICC leaders are distributed by signs of a growing indifference to the historic meanings of the movement, particularly among some of the larger more influential churches. Other churches, in the manner of the Willow Creek megachurch in suburban Chicago, are removing all traditional Christian symbols from their sanctuaries, so that “seekers” in the service who have been “turned off” to Christianity will not be offended before they hear the message. This includes, in some cases, even relocating the Lord’s Table at the back of the sanctuary, in the foyer, or even in a side room, from whence the elements are served after a brief prayer. One highly respected senior minister says that serving the Supper should never take longer than five minutes (and his is one of the largest worship services in the country)!

Another more serious situation, particularly as ICCs face the future, is the lag in reaching ethnic communities. Dr. Robert Fife, perhaps the premier interpreter of Stone-Campbell ideals among ICCs, refers sharply to this failure, especially in the inner cities, in his recent lecture for the Westwood Christian Foundation, *The Church Must Always be Reforming*: “Many congregations have proved unwilling or unable so to reform themselves that they could initiate cross-cultural ministry with its various burdens.”<sup>43</sup> He points out how once influential congregations in California became islands supported by a few members who wished, as they said, “to keep the doors open.” But open to whom? Fife asks. The answer, he says, was assuredly not “open to all,” with the result that such churches have disappeared, while others have moved and become captive to the suburbs.<sup>44</sup> Paul Williams, director of New York’s GYCM, warns that by 2054 the U.S. will be an almost wholly urban/ethnic nation, and that even today ethnic groups are moving into the mesosuburban belts around the cities, unevangelized even where ICCs are strong. Bob Szoke, public relations director of the CDEA, makes the same lament about Chicago evangelism.<sup>45</sup> The *Fact Finder 1994* shows inner city and ethnic work going on in most cities, especially among asiastic and hispanics,<sup>46</sup> but the efforts fall sadly behind the population curve in those places.

Well into the third quarter of our century, ICCs were predominately rural, at least numerically. If Henry Webb is to be followed, much of the isolationism, antagonism to organization, and indifference to the cities on the part of ICCs stems from this culture.<sup>47</sup> His case seems strong, if small town churches are lumped together with creekside and cornfield churches. I grew up, a preacher’s kid, in country town churches, and we knew the difference between a farmer’s church and a town church. Our leaders were the local banker, grocer, feed-store owner, utilities manager, newspaper editor, barber, and Ford garage operators. Throw in school teachers and principals. What you have working is a business mentality, albeit in a rural setting. “Urbagrarian” would be a better

description, especially as the town began to grow after the Second World War. A case could be made, I think, that independency has strong links to the business environment. One has to remember that the earliest calls to “restart” the movement came from a city—Cincinnati, which has remained to this day very much the voice and center of conservatism.<sup>48</sup> The earliest of the independent evangelistic associations was born in a city, in 1922—the Chicago District Evangelistic Association. The leaders who created the NACC were from the iron belt and industrial centers: P. H. Welshimer (Canton, OH), W. R. Walker (Columbus, OH), W. E. Sweeney (Columbus, IN), J. D. Murch (Cincinnati), C. G. Kindred (Chicago), Mark Collis (Lexington, KY), and O. A. Trinkle (Indianapolis). Particularly here at the end of the century the churches have taken on the new mesobourbian character reflective of the changes in American society.

#### 4. From Independency to Inter-dependency: the Matrix Model

It may be time to look at what is in front of our eyes and rethink our labels. What is there is a network of churches and agencies born of volunteer effort, enthusiasm driven, interrelated through mutual interest, surviving on merit, cooperating on request: virtually what Dean Walker was calling for in the Restudy Commission of the 1940s.<sup>49</sup> ICCs are not *un*-organized, it is only that their way of working reflects a different model than that of the traditional denominational structure with its nested bureaus. What they follow is a decentralized pattern of association, where the congregation or agency rises or falls on the energies it can attract to itself. Where there is linkage, the arrangement is a web or matrix of boards, both intra- and extra-congregational (the largest churches being more represented than the smaller). Because the agencies, like the individual congregations, are dependent on fundraising and loyalty-intensive skills for survival, the people most likely to benefit them are the practical types, the megachurch preachers and wealthy businessmen who have learned to put things together. Underrepresented, thus, are the smaller churches, particularly the rural, and academics, since the interests of the latter, focused more on research and the classroom, do not bring the specific powers needed to keep these free-wheeling agencies going. This matrix of personalities, contacts, and group influences, as it grows and spreads, is an almost perfect illustration of Adam Smith's old “Invisible Hand,” where each by doing what he or she believes to be the Lord's will, either alone or in concert with others, raises the tide of the whole. The evangelistic associations, interestingly, also reflect a business model to a higher degree, establishing branch congregations by providing oversight, preacher-managers, and funding for local operations until the churches are on their own or have to be closed. The sponsoring organizations, however, do not threaten the dogma of congregational autonomy of the churches being set up, since the sponsors are always on the margin and all too happy to see the offspring stand on their own. ICCs in mirroring this free enterprise model are never more themselves than when unconsciously

following it. I am convinced that it is this aspect of American individualism that has been more in control of how independent leaders read the New Testament than ruralism and helps explain the conservative reaction to liberal attempts, from 1920-1940, to impose a stricter organizational structure on the agencies. This is not to discount theological antagonisms at work, but the Restudy Commission was willing to let these go on living in a widespread fellowship, so long as none sought dominance.<sup>50</sup> What “organization” thinkers did not understand, apparently, is that they were following a statist model, exemplified in the pyramiding governmental bureaus around them, when conservatives saw the New Testament reflecting a non-intromissive methodology.

The question is, will ICCs ever be able to mount a unified program of any sort at the national level except a popular convention? Probably not. Only if the various evangelistic associations were willing to cooperate on a coast to coast effort would anything akin to a grand design get off the ground; and even then the plan could only be temporary and limited to evangelism, because the same jealousy for their individual autonomy that marks the local congregations, would inhibit these agencies from surrendering their territorial freedom of action. Certain facts have to be faced. ICCs have attracted to themselves viscerally conservative people, who in an age emerging from totalitarianism believe, in T. S. Eliot's words, “the one thing to avoid is a universalized planning.”<sup>50</sup> As we move into the twenty-first century, however, if futurists like Alvin Toffler can be believed, the emphasis in government and business will be on decentralized smallness and adaptability consonant with the computer-convenience of the age rather than the monumentalism of the Smokestack era.<sup>52</sup> Robert Nisbet, the sociologist, says what is demanded is a new *laissez-faire*, not the atomistic individualism of the past, but “partnerships” which can act communally;<sup>53</sup> i.e., social units that can command loyalties closer to the ground, preserve local sentiment and distinctiveness, and function in a way to let them renew their direction without waiting on settled organization to prop them up. Perhaps the matrix of *inter*-dependency now characteristic of ICCs is better suited than some of us would have thought to survive in the wildly shifting international and urban frontiers.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>I have drawn on two sources for this sketch: William Heuman, *The "Go Ye" Men: the Life Story of Elmer Kile*, College Press, Joplin, MO, 1968; and an unpublished *History of the "Go Ye" Chapel Mission: from the Beginning to the Present Time* compiled by Penny Faust, unfinished and dated Dec. 31, 1989.

<sup>2</sup>"Independent" is disliked by the leaders of Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, but I use it to distinguish the group from Christian Church (Disciples) and Churches of Christ (non-instrumental).

<sup>3</sup>The North American Christian Convention, first held in Indianapolis in October, 1927.

<sup>4</sup>See the *Christian Standard* for Dec. 4, 1943, and subsequent issues from 1944 to 1947. A detailed account of this agitation from the conservative point of view can be found in Henry E. Webb, *In Search of Christian Unity: A History of the Restoration Movement*, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, OH 1990, chs. 13-14; and James B. North, *Union in Truth: An Interpretive History of the Restoration Movement*, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, OH, 1994, ch. 12.

<sup>5</sup>The Park Avenue Christian Church, which traces its history to a congregation of Scotch Baptists, who later joined the Campbell movement.

<sup>6</sup>The Maspeth Church of Christ, Queens; the First Christian Church of Paterson and the Christian Church of East Orange, in NJ. Of course, Kile's own Greenpoint congregation was included in the fellowship as was a group of Slovak converts in Bayonne, NJ.

<sup>7</sup>Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*, Doubleday, New York, 1991. Hereafter, *Edge City*.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>9</sup>The U.S. Office of Management and Budget classifies metropolitan complexes of one million or more population as CMSAs (consolidated metropolitan statistical areas) and PMSAs (primary metropolitan statistical areas), the latter falling inside the former when specified criteria are met. See *The Universal Almanac 1994*, John W. Wright, ed., (Kansas City and New York: Andrews and McMeel, 1994), p. 194.

<sup>10</sup>*Edge City*, pp. xiii, 12. Garreau is drawing on Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, Oxford Univ. Press. New York, 1964. The term, *mesurbia*, is my own.

<sup>11</sup>John N. Vaughan, *Megachurches and America's Cities: How Churches Grow*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), pp. 62-63.

<sup>12</sup>Garreau has an appendix on the "laws" of Edge City development, one of which law is: "The Farthest Distance an American Will Willingly Walk Before Getting into a Car: Six Hundred feet, the length of two football fields," *Edge City*, p. 464.

<sup>13</sup>From a current brochure, "Top Ten Reasons to Start a Church in the City of Chicago," published by the CDEA. Six new churches are being planted in the next two years, one having been established with the alliance of the East 91st St. Christian Church of Indianapolis, the Suncrest Christian Church, in St. John, IN.

<sup>14</sup>Bill Twaddell, "Evangelism in the Sun," the *Restoration Herald*, Vol. LXVIII, No. 7 (July, 1994), pp. 3-4.

<sup>15</sup>East 91st St. has the goal of having planted twenty new churches by the 2000 (conversation with Dr. Russell Blowers, senior minister, Jan. 5, 1995).

<sup>16</sup>See *Northeast Vision*, Summer, 1994, a four page newsletter, edited by Don M. Hamilton, and published by the Empire State Evangelizing Association, Syracuse, NY. See also the Summer, 1994, issue of the Go Ye Chapel Mission's Update, Vol. 3, No. 11 (Nov. 1994).

<sup>17</sup>Wymore served until 1986. The most complete account of the NACC is Edwin V. Hayden's *North American Gold: The Story of 50 North American Christian Conventions*, College Press Pub. Co., Joplin, MO, 1989.

<sup>18</sup>Or possibly 2500, if spouses and children are counted. See Walter Birney, "Astounding Growth in Mission Work," the *Christian Standard*, Vol. CXVIII, No. 28 (July 11, 1993), pp. 9-10.

<sup>19</sup>*Christian Missionary Fellowship*, Vol. XLV, No. 1 (Jan.-Apr., 1994), p. 3.

<sup>20</sup>See *M.R.C. - News*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (NACC Edition, July, 1993), p. 1. Marvin Grooms, Coordinator of the Missions Resource Center, Cincinnati, in a telephone conversation with me said that the M.R.C.'s statistics were based on a one-third response to their questionnaires (although covering two thirds of missionaries in the field).

<sup>21</sup>See the table on p. 1 of the *M.R.C. - News*, issue above.

<sup>22</sup>See his “The Mission of the Christian College,” in *Adventuring for Christian Unity and Other Essays*, Tom Foust, ed. (Johnson City, TN: Emmanuel School of Religion, 1992), pp. 235-50. For his comments on Campbell’s ideas see “Where We Have Been, Where We Are. Where We Are Going - Educationally,” *Ibid.*, pp. 255-65. Hereafter, *Adventuring*.

<sup>23</sup>*U.S. News and World Report*, Vol. 117, No. 12 (Sept. 26, 1994). p. 114.

<sup>24</sup>*Adventuring*, p. 235.

<sup>25</sup>Frederick Doyle Kershner (1875-1953), dean of the School of Religion, 1924-44, and noted Disciple scholar and writer of the early twentieth century.

<sup>26</sup>The first building ever to bear Phillips’ name.

<sup>27</sup>Emmanuel also has regional accreditation, as do both Cincinnati Bible Seminary and Lincoln Christian Seminary.

<sup>28</sup>The D.Min. program was begun in 1992 and awaits accreditation by the ATS in 1995.

<sup>29</sup>Constitution, Emmanuel School of Religion, Article IV, Section 3, and Article V.

<sup>30</sup>D. Newell Williams, ed. *A Case Study of Mainstream Protestantism: the Disciples’ Relation to American Culture, 1880-1989*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1991), pp. 13-18, 384-85, 411, 561-63, 570-73. Hereafter, *Case Study*.

<sup>31</sup>*Adventuring*, pp. 296, 326-28, 332-33, 493-96; see especially Walker’s comments on Disciples’ Restructure in “The Tradition of Christ,” pp. 525-56, and “Renewal through Recovery,” pp. 557-81.

<sup>32</sup>Walker insisted that the bread be broken visibly before the congregation and the wine poured out, either from a flagon into a chalice, or from chalice to chalice, while reciting the appropriate words of institution.

<sup>33</sup>The original use of the phrase is found in Anthony Calvert’s description of William Robinson in his unpublished Master’s thesis at the University of Birmingham (England), *The Published Works of William Robinson: an Interpretive, Annotated Bibliography of a Catholic Evangelical*, 1984, p. iv. For an excellent brief discussion of Walker’s view of the church, see William J. Richardson, “The Nature of the Church in the Thought of Dean E. Walker,” unpublished lecture, July 10, 1991, at The Theological Forum of the NACC, Denver, CO.

<sup>34</sup>Henry E. Webb, “Our Restoration Movement: Heritage and Destiny—Reexamined,” Dean E. Walker Lecture #20, delivered July 8, 1993, at the annual breakfast of the European Evangelistic Society during the NACC at St. Louis, and privately printed by the Society, p. 16. Hereafter, Webb, *ECC Lecture*. A good example of what Webb is talking about can be seen in an article by Roger Chambers, “Restoring Movement to the Movement,” *Restoration*, Vol. LXXIII, No. 2 (Feb., 1995), p. 7.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup>Dr. Michael Armour, pulpit minister for the Skillman Church of Christ, Dallas, TX, sums up the effect of the forums as developing a healthy “likemindedness” among participants: “While they have not led us to common conclusions, they have moved as to a common love.” *One Body*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Winter, 1994), p. 14.

<sup>38</sup>“It’s time to stop making arguments and start making allowances,” *Ibid.*, p. 24. “To avoid sectarianism we need to recognize that the Church of Christ, or the Church of God, as it is commonly called in the New Testament, is not necessarily identified with any one particular group,” *Ibid.*, Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer, 1994), p. 5. “Merely calling ourselves undenominational will convince no one,” *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, Spring, 1992, pp. 10, 20. Volume and Number do not appear in the 1992 issue.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9. See other developments in the *Christian Standard*, Vol. CXXIX, No. 44 (Oct. 30, 1994), pp. 12-13, and No. 50 (Dec. 11, 1994), p. 6.

<sup>41</sup>*One Body*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Summer, 1994), p. 23, and No. 4 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 4-6; and *Restoration Herald*, Vol. LXXIII, No. 2 (Feb., 1995), p. 18.

<sup>42</sup>Barry L. Callen and James B. North, “Open Forum: a Meeting of Two Movements,” *Vital Christianity, a Publication of the Church of God*, February, 1993.

<sup>43</sup>Robert O. Fife, *The Church Must Always Be Reforming*. Fourth Annual Restoration lectures) Los Angeles, CA: Westwood Christian Foundation, 1994), p. 29.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 29, 33-34.

<sup>45</sup>Telephone conversation, Oct. 6, 1994.

<sup>46</sup>Hispanic congregations now hold their own national convention, *Christian Standard*, Vol. CXXVI, No. 25 (June 23, 1991), p. 18.

<sup>47</sup>See Roger W. Strump's study, "Spatial Patterns of Growth and Decline among the Disciples of Christ, 1890-1980," *Case Study*, pp. 449, 459-61; and Webb, *ECC Lecture*, pp. 10-12. Webb here follows the W. E. Garrison thesis in *Religion Follows the Frontier* (1931).

<sup>48</sup>Standard Pub. Co. (the *Christian Standard*, and *Lookout*), the Christian Restoration Association (the *Restoration Herald*), Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary, the North American Christian Convention, The Christian Benevolent Assoc., National Christian Education Convention, The Missions Resource Center, ten other mission, charitable, and evangelizing agencies, and twenty-six congregations, not counting churches in nearby southwestern Ohio, southeastern Indiana, and northern Kentucky.

<sup>49</sup>*Adventuring*, pp. 197 ff., but especially 506, 515-16, 520-22; also his "the New Testament Church for Rural Life" (1936), pp. 160-61, and the later essays, "the Anatomy of Christian Unity" (1964), pp. 311, 322, 326-33, and "The One Faith" (1966), pp. 126-28.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 520-21.

<sup>51</sup>T. S. Eliot, *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1949), p. 112.

<sup>52</sup>Alvin Toffler, *Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), pp. 91, 261-62, 464.

<sup>53</sup>Robert A. Nisbet, *Community and Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. xii-xiii, xiv, 278-79. ICC now share an electronic bulletin board, headed by David L. Burns of the Byblos Conference (*Christian Standard*, Vol. CXXX, No. 6 (Feb. 5, 1995), p. 3.

## **Dale W. and Mary Ann Brown Named Fund**

The Browns are active members of National City Christian Church having served in many different capacities but having served as flower and decoration arrangers for the church and its many activities. Dale is Director of Libraries and Instructional Resources for the Public Schools of Arlington, VA. Mary Ann Brown, having taken early retirement from teaching school, is now serving as Directory of Community Ministries at National City Christian Church. This Named Fund was established by Mr. and Mrs. Brown.

## **Henry E. and Emerald Webb Named Fund**

Dr. and Mrs. Henry Webb have long been active in the life and ministry of the Christian Church. He served as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Religion at Milligan College from 1965 until his retirement. He is now Dean F. Walker, Professor of Church History Emeritus. Mrs. Webb served as Secretary to the Business Manager at Milligan College until her retirement, her primary place in the congregation has been in the music program. She continues to sing in the choir of First Christian Church, Johnson City, TN, where they belong. This Fund was established by Dr. and Mrs. Webb.

# **The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Into the Third Millennium**

by Brenda E. Brasher\*

## **1. Introduction:**

*"It takes more than a book to run a church."* A. Campbell

My title implies that this paper is a study of Disciple future. Such is and is not the case. I do address the future of Disciple tradition, but by a circuitous route and primarily in the concluding section. The initial sections address cultural changes underway in the USA, and present a rather detailed examination of the way one mainline (non-Disciple) Protestant congregation has coped with some of them. The non-Disciples focus of the paper's early sections is intentional and strategic. As opposed to Anthony Dunnivant, for example, who examined Restructure from inside the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), I am concerned with events occurring outside the Christian Church that limit the range of actions available to Disciples groups in various areas as they enter the third millennium. You might say, therefore, that what follows is a history of the present and of the probable future. Through a depiction of American culture, I offer for your consideration a contextualization of Disciples tradition which reveals forces affecting Disciple institutional life enshadowed when the tradition, itself, is at the analytic center.

For those compulsively driven to turn to the last page of a mystery novel and find out who did it before they can read anything else, the paper's central argument is as follows. While no single scholar or piece of analysis can sum up America's complex, pluralistic culture, certain socio-cultural factors appear to be giving late 20th century religious institutions in the USA a particularly difficult time. I describe the constellation of these factors as a cultural rupture (though decidedly *not* a culture war). This rupture contributes to an unstable climate for American religious institutions. Still, some religious groups are managing to maintain their balance amid it. I illustrate this by telling in some detail the story of a mainline Protestant urban congregation near death whose membership has dramatically increased in the past four years. In closing, I discuss three implications of cultural rupture for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). To retain a minor element of suspense, I will postpone disclosing these until I unpack the bulk of my argument; however, some implications of my analysis may best be discerned not by an academic on the margins of church life but by those enmeshed in the daily administration of Disciple institutions. Thus, I consider this paper conversational rather than prescriptive. It is my partial and limited contribution to the ongoing dialogue on the future of the Stone-Campbell movement. It is only as those concerned with the future of the movement pool our partial perspectives, our situated knowledges, that the poignantly necessary public discourse defining what Disciple tradition has to offer people living in the third millennium can continue to

emerge.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Living in the USA: The Anatomy of a Cultural Rupture

*Not all people exist in the same Now. They do so only externally, by virtue of the fact that they may all be seen today. But that does not mean that they are living at the same time with others. (Block 1977, 22)*

Like good parties and bad marital quarrels, cultural eras neither begin nor end neatly. At the simplest, they overlap. Artifacts valuable in one era may cease to be a source of significant cultural meaning in the next. Others may retain or increase their cultural capital. Since no clear dividing lines distinguish cultural shifts, epochal change can be a dizzying affair. In the late 20th century, a lively intellectual debate is underway over whether we currently are experiencing an especially confusing cultural shift. The shift in contention is between *modernity* and *postmodernity*. The debate centers around whether the *historical modern era* marked by a high value accorded to reason and cultural institutions and practices that favor a unified social order is losing cultural power. If so, no defining cultural paradigm appears to be taking its place; rather, *postmodernity* reigns. Though postmodernity is at times identified as the cultural paradigm of late capitalism, it also is described perhaps more perceptively as not a new historical era but the disappearance of an old one followed by the absence of sufficient central characteristics to determine anything else (Habermas 1987, Best and Keller 1991).

In what is frequently identified by librarians and book store organizers as cultural studies literature, a moderate consensus exists that certain characteristics differentiate the two. Where modernity is the last child of the enlightenment birthed by the end of feudalism, postmodernity is popularly portrayed as a pluralistic brood of 20th century techno-infants cloned into existence by accelerating technologies. Where modernists value internally consistent texts, postmodernists are seduced by playful images and icons (Baudrillard 1984). Where modernists aim for rational social coherence, postmodernists embrace multiplicity, plurality, ambiguity, and fragmentation (Venturi 1966). Debates over modernity and postmodernity generally have taken place in philosophical and aesthetic academic circles where substantive normative overtones stamp the language involved. Postmodernist deconstruct what modernists claim to impartial reason, tracing the historical context of putative self-referential concepts, revealing the way modernist truths oppress and dominate others (Foucault 1975, Smith 1990). Taylor, for example, claims that modernism is an especially fertile ideological ground for fascism (Taylor 1994). Modernists, on the other hand, decry postmodern theories claiming they mask a new conservatism. They worry that the fragmented societies for which postmodernists are busily providing much beguiling and sustaining ideological support will be devoid of effective mechanisms for social justice (Habermas 1987). Since postmodernists eschew totalizing narratives, an attempt to resolve the

debate in favor of one paradigm would, by default, award the honor to modernity. Given this, the most useful metaphor to describe late 20th century life that respects the state of this debate but does not push it for more certainty than is available is to identify the present as a time of cultural rupture.

Contemporary demographic factors rather eerily mirror the condition of cultural rupture. In the 20th century, the population of the USA has increased threefold; yet, the dispersal pattern of this enlarged population has simultaneously exacerbated and broken down distinctions between urban and rural life. The economically prosperous who initially moved their homes and then their stores out of urban areas into the suburbs, now have moved their offices into suburban areas and a significant number of their work sites out of the country. The result is that suburbs are less a place of escape from cities than a new type of city, what Joel Garreau describes as an Edge City<sup>2</sup>—polynucleated, underregulated and largely devoid of non-commercial public space—which is rapidly engulfing formerly suburban and rural areas. Urban areas, with more people per square mile than ever before, are populated by the young, ethnically-diverse and economically-underprivileged (not mutually exclusive categories).

To survive, institutions must navigate the conflicts rupture has unleashed without being crushed by the contrasting agendas underway. For religious institutions, this presents the most difficult challenge of all. As social groups whose *raison d'être* is customarily linked with cosmologies and ethics, religious groups invariably possess and publicly convey explicit value commitments. This value transmission task thrusts them into the swirling tides of cultural controversies whenever they appear. A social group expected to tell moral stories, religious organizations are readily deemed an irritating public presence when disagreements arise over what a “good” story is, who its protagonists and antagonists should be — in other words, over cultural values. In today’s cultural rupture, little consensus exists regarding which language or languages should be employed in the telling of moral stories much less what its characters and plots should be like. As a result, religious institutions are unavoidably prone *by the nature of what they do* to alienate multiple segments of the populace.<sup>3</sup>

For moderate religious groups such as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the current rupture presents an even more serious problem. As centrists, Disciples’ preferred institutional forms and habitual practices connect the tradition with a cross section of people whose values vary. In periods of cultural cohesion, sufficient shared values exist to congeal this diverse constituency in spite of its significant differences; however, in the modern/postmodern rupture, it is precisely this center of shared values which has thinned producing a culture of diminished adhesive capacity.<sup>4</sup> Along with other moderates, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with its historic ties to diverse constituencies is discovering that in cultural rupture the diversity it once lauded as a sign of modernist unity now anchors it to constituencies so conflicted

they threaten to tear the whole apart. Wade Clark Roof and many others refer to this phenomena as the “collapse of the middle;” however, when considering concrete examples such as the divisiveness within the Presbyterian Church over the 1991 *Presbyterians and Human Sexuality Document* and within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) over the nomination of Rev. Dr. Michael K. Kinnamon for General Minister and President that same year, “the collapse” is a word that falls short of accurately conveying the volatility of the situation.

In light of this, it is poignant to recall that while cultural rupture gathered steam, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) had a bruising internal battle over organizational ideology known rather erroneously as “Restructure.”<sup>5</sup> Of the many reasons provided for Restructure, a central one was to promulgate a vision of a more tightly unified connection between the church’s constitutive components. From a cultural point of view, it is difficult to imagine a more unhelpful period for its implementation. In a centrifugal era, the Disciples officially embraced a centripetal organizational ideal. It may be fruitful at some point to discuss Restructure in terms of its cultural anti-currency.

### **3. Growing Amid Cultural Rupture:**

What is difficult for large, national organizations, local groups can sometimes manage. It may be a question of scale. Amid today’s cultural rupture, some individual congregations are surviving and even thriving. First Congregational Church of Long Beach is one of them. Although the city of Long Beach was transfigured by cultural rupture events, First Church piloted a course through the changes that enabled it to minister as an urban Christian congregation. By telling a tale of First Church, I do not intend to infer that it is typical of mainline congregations or that the choices it made can or should be the choices of others. Yet most of the challenges First Church faced were triggered by national events rather than local ones; therefore, this story of the decisions First Church made through a 20 year period of substantial urban change can be read as a case study of the dizzying impact cultural rupture can have on a religious institution by reshaping the community around it. To the extent Disciples congregations in various locations brave similar rates of changes (if not these specific changes), the story of how one congregation weathered the cultural storm may provide helpful insights to institutional survival.

#### **First Church and Long Beach: A Little History**

Located in the heart of Long Beach, California, First Church occupies a stately, two-story, Italianesque brick structure at the corner of Third and Cedar. A bronze plaque mounted immediately inside the oversized wooden front entry doors identifies it as a historic site. The foundational statement of faith approved by the 26 people who initially formed First Church in 1888, testifies to the presence of spiritual, intellectual openness and commitment to change as integral components of congregational identity.

Christianity is a spirit and a life. It cannot therefore be expressed philosophically in a creed...Christianity is the religion of daily life and is to be applied to all human affairs...We believe that the Scriptures constitute a continuing unfolding revelation of God which the discoveries of science, the facts of history and the providences of life are to aid us to interpret constantly and freshly. (Centennial: 17)

Coupled with its United Church of Christ (UCC) denominational heritage, the institutional legatee of the New England Pilgrims, First Church is a religious institution firmly grounded in the American establishment.

Like many urban congregations, First Church has a bent toward civic activism. Its members started a local Farmers Market so independent area growers could have an affordable retail outlet for their produce. When need for an urban retirement center developed, members formed a non-profit corporation, donated the land, obtained funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and built it. In interviews, recent and established members alike indicated they cherish the congregation's legacy of civic activism.

Long Beach, the home of First Church, is a city of 442,000. Located approximately 26 miles south of Los Angeles, its palm-tree decorated downtown opens onto the Pacific Ocean. For much of its early existence, the city had a reputation as a conservative community perhaps due to the city's origin as a camp meeting site for Methodists. Old time locals wryly claimed that Long Beach used to be called, "Iowa by the Sea" because many of the city's first residents originally hailed from Iowa.

Until the mid-20th century, Long Beach and First Church grew and prospered. Federal military spending levels enabled the City's major employer, the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, to provide ample employment. The discovery of offshore oil gave Long Beach a solid upperclass. It was a boom era. During this period, First Church was "the" place civic leaders came for worship. According to one long-time member, First Church was, "one of the great churches of the nation [in terms of] membership, activities and social concerns." First Church also functioned as a public place where those who had made it could display financial success. One elderly member reminisced that, "In the palmy days of oil discovery...[members] attended functions of the church in their chauffeur-driven automobiles."

A federal policy change that substantially impacted Long Beach was the relaxation of national immigration laws in 1965. While the rhetoric employed to promote this change spoke of opening up America, border cities like Long Beach were the specific places where new immigrants settled. In Long Beach, their arrival transformed "Iowa by the Sea" into a polycultural city. As newcomers poured into downtown, numerous old timers left. Many who fled downtown had been First Church mainstays. Congregational attendance of 1,000 plus each Sunday fell to 500, then 400, then 300. The city's central commercial district waned. The vacant storefronts departing businesses left did not stay vacant long. X-rated

cinemas and “adult” book shops appeared right in the heart of Long Beach. They were followed by redevelopment agencies which boomed in California during the 1970’s and 1980’s because the California Redevelopment law allowed cities to set them up. Long Beach boosters capitalized on this law, and architecturally remodeled Long Beach. They razed the “adult” entertainment area. Several new high rise office buildings went up. A downtown mall was constructed.

Between 1980 and 1990, the population of Long Beach increased 12% while housing units edged up only 8%. Unrelated adult households increased 47.4% and single parent households increased 33.3%, but the elderly population decreased 38%. Asian, black and mixed racial populations in the urban area tripled. By 1990, urban Long Beach was no longer the forlorn, deserted place of the 1960’s; yet, it also was not the booming family place of decades before.

National peace of the late 1980’s and 1990’s brought unemployment to Long Beach. As the Long Beach Naval Shipyard reduced operations, women and men living on the street became visible components of downtown life. By the early 1990’s, entering First Church day or night involved social encounters with homeless people asking for money.

Another national change that eventually had a profoundly dramatic affect upon Long Beach can be traced to the 1969 Stonewall riot in New York. What began as a small conflict between New York police and gay male transvestites set off a national movement to address civil rights issues for lesbians and gays (Duberman 1993). Although I discovered no demographic documentation of a lesbian and gay community in Long Beach, civic, church and gay/lesbian community leaders all concurred that a sizable lesbian and gay population had quietly existed in Long Beach for decades. Without hard data, the size of this pre-1980’s lesbian/gay subcommunity must remain speculative; however, as the national trend toward a new publicness around lesbian and gay issues began to affect Long Beach, the hitherto obscured lesbian/gay subpopulation came into public view. In a 1981 “Press Telegram” article, civic leaders stated that more than 30 downtown restaurants and bars catered to the city’s lesbian and gay population. They estimated that lesbian/gay people made up 12% of the total urban population.<sup>6</sup> Three years after that, in 1984, the city’s lesbian and gay subcommunity initiated a Long Beach Gay Pride parade. City leaders who had been willing to acknowledge the presence of a lesbian/gay population were much less willing to promote an increase in this population’s public presence. The resultant clashes between City leaders and gay/lesbian activists made the subcommunity’s presence a hot topic of public conversation; but, compromises on both sides eventually enabled the parade to go forward. Although no firm count of the Long Beach gay/lesbian population exists, civic leaders estimated in 1993 that lesbians and gays make up 25% of the city’s urban dwellers.<sup>7</sup>

As Long Beach altered, First Church’s relationship to the City was called into question. The new Long Beach was substantially comprised of Cambodia-Americans, Mexican-Americans, lesbians, gays, single

parents and homeless people. These were social and ethnic groups that First Church's worship was ill-prepared to reach. Housing, bi-lingual education, child care, lesbian and gay civil rights were the pressing human concerns of the new Long Beach; but, First Church with its eroded membership base thanks to suburban white-flight was in little position to provide services necessary to meet them.

The situation presented the congregation with two unavoidable dilemmas regarding survival and mission. In terms of survival, the dilemma was, *Given First Church's heritage of buildings, programs and traditions, how should the congregation discard or adapt its traditional resources to persist as a Christian congregation?* An activist congregation, First Church's mission dilemma was, *Given First Church's commitment to civic activism and the pluralistic values of its increasingly postmodern urban community, how should the congregation invest its ministerial energies?*

### To Change or Not to Change?

In 1971, an earthquake struck the nearby community of Fillmore. Though the quake's epicenter was miles from Long Beach, the event was a "sounding alarm" to the City according to one area resident. By the end of the year, the City Council passed a seismic hazard law that defined any building built prior to 1934 as hazardous. It also established a schedule for compliance, and declared that buildings must be brought up to code within the City's timetable or be demolished.

At First Church, the passage of this law meant First Church either had to invest millions in its buildings or leave downtown. Members' attachment to the building and lingering desire to remain an urban ministry militated against the choice of abandoning the downtown to follow its traditional base into the suburbs. Once the City approved the use of newly developed techniques that halved the cost of retrofitting the sanctuary, the congregation opted to spend \$2.5 million and bring its main building up to code. Unable also to fund renovation of the education wing, the congregation had it torn down. Construction began in 1987. When the project was finished a year later, First Church had a sanctuary that looked exactly the same, considerably less overall usable square footage and a multimillion dollar debt.

### Changes and Results:

First Church's dwindling pool of aging members and depleted resources posed a startling contrast to urban Long Beach's accelerating community needs. If First Church was to remain an urban ministry, institutional maintenance would not suffice. The congregation needed to change. Change it did. One significant change was the addition of a new, wildly talented senior pastor: the Rev. Dr. Mary Ellen Killsby. The first female senior pastor in the history of the congregation, Rev. Killsby came to First Church a seasoned-pastor and an award-winning preacher. A Biblically-literate process theologian and keenly articulate scholar, she also brought national stature to First Church's pulpit. When the

*Wall Street Journal* informed its readers about the recent move towards inclusive language in Christian worship, it ran an extended interview with Rev. KILLSBY on its front page (Niebuhr 1992). Diminutive, intellectual and female, Rev. KILLSBY swathed in a traditional clergy robe and standing in the burnished wood pulpit presented a dual image of tradition and novelty. This duality was reinforced by the tradition-and-newness, Biblical-process theology undergirding each message she preached. At First Church, the bridge of world views Rev. KILLSBY both represented and presented brought results. Worship attendance increased. Young professional singles and couples began to join the church. Four years after her arrival, Sunday worship attendance had doubled.

While lauded for her skills at preaching, administration and community building, KILLSBY's experience with the United Church of Christ's Open and Affirming process helped First Church make its second major change. Shortly after her arrival, the congregation initiated the process to become Open and Affirming—a UCC institutional process by which a congregation commits itself to redress prejudice against homosexuals. Five factors appeared to weigh most heavily in the congregation's decision to change its identity by responding to the lesbian/gay population: 1) For years First Church had dedicated members of unacknowledged-but-known homosexual orientation. 2) More than other subcommunities, Long Beach leaders were aware and concerned with the City's sizable lesbian and gay subcommunity due to public conflicts over the Gay Pride Parade, and First Church cherished its residual ties to this leadership. 3) As the AIDS epidemic spread, some gay men close to members of First Church became infected with the AIDS virus and died creating a pool of concern for the gay/lesbian population. 4) The national offices of the UCC increasingly encouraged local congregations to address homosexuality as a social justice issue. 5) With KILLSBY, First Church had at its helm a leader skilled at addressing sexual orientation issues within Christian communities. For all of these reasons, or some of these reasons, or none of them, when First Church staff began the initial meetings of the Open and Affirming process, the congregation responded. A year after deliberations began, the congregation voted early in 1992 to become Open and Affirming.

Throughout the period of deliberation and after the vote, membership at First Church continued to increase. A large percentage of the newcomers were young, straight, married couples in their child bearing years. Their involvement swelled the number of children in attendance, and placed new demands on children's programming. In 1993, the congregation took on an additional staff person for children's music, and started a youth choir. When interviewed, these couples gave a variety of answers regarding why they got involved with First Church. Most claimed they joined First Church because of the congregation's Open and Affirming decision, although the reasons they gave for being attracted by the decision differed. In a stewardship speech one Sunday, a newcomer stated to the congregation that he and his wife joined First

Church because they wanted, ...to raise our children in a different environment.” Another couple explained during an interview in their home that since both had family members who were homosexual, they wanted to worship someplace where those family members would be welcome when they visited. As she sat breast feeding her newborn baby, a newcomer in her early 20’s explained that she and her husband had near relatives who were homosexual. Since they were not sure whether genetic inheritance played a role in sexual orientation, they had opted to affiliate with a church that looked favorably upon homosexuality in case any of their children were homosexual. The lesbians and gays who came to First Church told a slightly different story. They primarily were well-educated professionals who already were Christian, but wanted to worship in a broadly representative congregation with children and elderly people, heterosexual singles and couples and not, as one gay male put it, “in a gay ghetto.” The congregation’s minister of membership spoke about First Church’s decision to become Open and Affirming congregation in terms of numbers and energy.

Sixty-five members joined the church last year. So far this year, we have fifty who have joined. Now instead of an aging and dying congregation, we have involvement by young professionals and young people who are very enthusiastically embracing the idea of being part of a normal, straight [not exclusively gay or lesbian] congregation.

### Open and Affirming: Modern and Postmodern

In one sense, First Church’s decision to become an Open and Affirming congregation signaled the congregation’s retention of a strongly modernist orientation. An institutional response to a societal problem, “Open and Affirming” is much in the spirit of Mohandas Gandhi’s and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s activism. Simultaneously an act of resistance and hope, it resists the exclusion and denial of homosexual life by a public statement that it hopes other institutions will recognize as moral. Thus, the social justice assumptions inherent in First Church’s Open and Affirming decision betray a modernist view of community as people who share a moral vision, and their possession of a modernist vision of themselves as a moral community in relationship to public life. As the comment from one member implied, the congregation’s decision to commit a significant portion of its social justice energy to combat discrimination against homosexuals developed out of the particular components of First Church’s identity and experience. A key element in this mix, one that again reveals traces of modernism, was the influence of First Church’s UCC denominational tie.

In the latter half of the 20th century, those who advocated expanded societal acceptance of lesbians and gays started to speak about the issues involved employing the language of civil rights. Since civil rights concerns are a traditional purview of the UCC, it was practically *de rigueur* that once this happened lesbian and gay issues would become part of the UCC’s social agenda. At its 1985 General Synod, the UCC adopted a resolution calling on congregations to declare themselves

"Open and Affirming." In 1992, the UCC released a film criticizing the church as a contributor to the oppression of lesbians and gays and identifying it as "the main institutional legitimator of homophobia" (United Church of Christ). At the local level, this denominational stance provided First Church members with the interpretive tools necessary to describe their Open and Affirming decision not as a radical change but, as one member explained it, a contemporary version of an ongoing UCC tradition.

First Church's Open and Affirming commitment had postmodern affects on congregational life which further contributed to its growth. Rather than force an impossible unanimity, congregational leaders embraced a flexible, multi-centered congregational life at the same time they claimed a public identity which distinguished them to the urban community and to their own members. Traditional members who were against the change but desired to retain a connection to First Church moved their center of worship from Sunday morning services to one of the congregation's social groups. Gays and lesbians intrigued by First Church's "Open & Affirming" stand but mistrustful of its traditional worship also got involved in congregational social groups rather than Sunday morning worship. [Needless to say, these were not the SAME social groups.] The outcome was that small congregations developed within the congregation, a liberal version of what Wade Clark Roof described as meta-churches (Roof 1993).

When diverse constituencies develop within a congregation, schism can be the eventual result as Steve Warner's detailed study of the changing dynamics in a California Presbyterian congregation made clear (Warner 1988). At First Church, small groups that simultaneously offered attachment to and detachment from congregational life blunted schismatic tendencies. These small groups allowed members to achieve greater individualism than community worship allowed. They cushioned against the impact of change enabling change to occur. Only two couples left the congregation after the Open and Affirmative vote. Embracing complexity and pluralism, First Church became a place where life in multiple worlds occurred. This institutional adaptation allowed for the semi-privatization of faith and clear congregational identity. The flexible organizational pattern they adopted turned them from a dying congregation to an urban religious group growing amid cultural rupture.<sup>8</sup>

Lest the congregation's ability to do this appear a blithe accomplishment, consider a member's moving words about the suffering this transformation entailed:

We've been at the site for a hundred years, and we're just starting to interact with the neighborhood. We want to grow, yet, I think it's finally dawning on people that growth means change. I don't think they [the congregation's traditional members] acknowledge that—that what growth really means to the church is change. They wanted growth in their old, traditional ways...but growth actually means change. And Mary Ellen has brought that. She brought new vitality and new life and new growth, but tied into all that is this change. That's what people are dealing with, including myself. We're going to have to accept all of it...just like the teachings of Christ. You can't just accept the

sermon on the mount without the crucifixion. There's both sides to it. And I think the congregation is coming to terms with it.

#### **4. Available Futures and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):**

While few Disciple congregations in the USA face the exact situation of First Church, cultural rupture is wide ranging in scope; thus, each congregation is probably, like First Church, being pressed to respond to a combination of rupture characteristics shaped by particular regional factors. Other factors may hold nationally. Most urban congregations are likely being confronted as First Church was with increased community needs. Also, since the overall increase in American population has been accompanied by an overall decline in Disciple membership, it is likely that most are, like First Church, facing these increased needs with dwindled human and material resources. Given these divergent trends, if Disciples wish to continue on as Disciples important questions need to be asked and answered; however, it is not simply any questions that must be raised. Similar to the way First Church creatively adapted its own tradition to respond to community and resource changes, Disciples' most promising paths will be grounded in Disciple tradition.

I offer three "available futures" for your consideration though each is not exclusive of the others and additional available futures may prove more probable than those I identify.

One is for Disciple urban congregations to undertake area analyses and draw from their community research data to flexibly specialize such as First Church did in Long Beach. By this, I do not mean to recommend that every Disciple urban congregation should become Open and Affirming. Open and Affirming worked as a specialization niche for First Church because gay/lesbian social justice issues were already a part of congregation life, and an important issue in their community. It also worked because First Church hired a leader experienced with the issue and because a significant portion of its elderly, traditional members were willing to let go of many old ways and change.

Factors conducive to this specialized future include the overall high educational level of Disciple members, the social justice strain of Disciple tradition and the high percentage of Disciple congregations sited in urban areas where needs are multiple. Factors inhibiting this future may be the internal resources of individual congregations. Congregations with ample resources may see little reason to change regardless of their membership levels. Congregations with scant resources may find it difficult to summon the energy necessary to do the hard work of change.

A second available future is for those in the Disciple tradition to reclaim their frontier heritage, and once more be experimental in worship. This would require Disciples to interpret the liberty integral to the Stone-Campbell movement in the way it originally became attached to the movement as originality, novelty, freedom in worship. Like some of the most rapidly growing Christian congregations in the USA today, Disciple congregations could move towards becoming

religious groups OF popular culture and move towards a worship service where people come in casual dress, music revolves around popular culture instruments such as guitars and drums, songs are easy to sing choruses, and religious events are expected to occur. The challenge in this available future will be for Disciples to reconfigure the pieces of what exists to startle, amaze and communicate with the American people of the third millennium. Favoring this available future is the strong connection with early Stone-Campbell movement history and the huge popularity those employing this approach to worship currently enjoy. Working against it are the high overall age of most Disciple members for whom drums and electric guitars in worship may cause profound culture shock (perhaps comparable to the shock many established church leaders felt when they attended their first camp meeting!)

Finally, a third available future could easily develop out of those congregations brave enough to attempt the second one. If the Disciple tradition were to reconnect with its populist heritage, it could begin to grow megachurches of its own. Like camp meetings did in the 1800's, megachurches meet socialization as well as religious needs of large segments of the American populace. A mega's size allows it to apply significant resources to worship and programming, an important consideration in our age where mass media has accustomed most people to professional-quality events. At the same time, a mega's size enables a variety of religious practices to occur and provides substantial opportunity for individual deviance while maintaining attachment to the group meeting the psychological profiles of today's baby boomers, baby busters and generation x'ers (Roof). Disciple churches particularly in areas where rural space is dwindling and edge cities are growing over everything in site like kudzu over a South Carolina telephone poll might provide the population base and find the sites to start these megas. If they decide to undertake this, they must address the need for non-profit public space/s in edge cities, and realize that the first step is to construct methods of access to those spaces in the postsuburban landscape. This will require rural and suburban congregations to get politically active and help organize community pressure, securing zoning requirements to ensure that developers include non-profit public spaces in shopping malls and office parks that churches can use, for instance, rather than allowing development groups to continue to construct purely commercial places. It will also require congregations to be actively involved in the patient nurturing of new charismatic leaders who can lead megas. Factors favoring this available future include the high educational level of Disciple members, a critical asset for the political and environment tasks involved and for the nurturance of new leaders for mega-congregations required. Also, Disciple tradition's heavy use of lay leadership would be of major benefit, since lay leadership is necessary for mega-programming to occur. Problematic factors include Disciple tradition's scant familiarity with large church groups and the proportionately higher seed money necessary to assist

a mega in its early stages of growth.

Amid cultural rupture, Disciple congregations must determine how to be churches in an era where people primarily live in urban areas or edge cities which possess little unifying identity and many, but few shared, needs. Each of the available futures I have outlined presents possible alternatives to address this situation, yet each presents difficulties as well. As we enter the third millennium, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) faces a considerable challenge; but, I contend, what awaits is more like the labors of Herakles than the task of Sisyphus: daunting, but not impossible.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Two important texts addressing the concept of "situated knowledges" are Seyla Benhabib's exploration of its philosophical implications for social theory in *The Concrete and Generalized Other* and Sandra Harding's *The Science Question in Feminism* which considers its implications for philosophy of science. For this paper, I draw upon Donna J. Haraway nuanced interpretation of Harding's stance (See "Situated Knowledges" in Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature.*)

<sup>2</sup>See Joel Garreau's *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* for a detailed description of this phenomenon. While Garreau's focus is not on religion, he does deftly sketch the problems Edge Cities present to religious institutions.

<sup>3</sup>Fundamentalist and other religious institutions that embrace similar narrowly defined ideologies may be better equipped to weather this rupture than others. Intentionally self-marginalized, fundamentalists expect to appeal to a fragment of the population and anticipate conflict with the rest. Today's absence of societal consensus, unmarked by signs of intrasocietal moral protest as in the 1960's, provides a situation that is relatively consonant with their worldview.

<sup>4</sup>In many ways, this analysis is consonant with the work of Robert Wuthnow who traces contemporary intrareligious conflicts in American Christianity to a division between liberals and conservatives whose intensity has been heightened by the waning influence of denominational identity. (Wutimow) In terms of the modernity/postmodernity rupture, the wane of denominational identity that Wuthnow identifies is somewhat parallel with the disappearance of the large, historical narratives of modernity that postmodern cultural analysts perceive.

<sup>5</sup>In his analysis of CC/DOC restructure, Dunnivant states, "In the years since Restructure, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has changed little structurally." (Dunnivant 1990:17) His point, with which I largely agree, is that the dominant affect of Restructure has been institutional ideology rather than institutional organization.

<sup>6</sup>"Long Beach Gays: 12% and Growing," *Press-Telegram*, Long Beach: March 1, 1981.

<sup>7</sup>Since sexual orientation is not a census question and American culture has not historically embraced homosexual identity, documenting the existence of a lesbian/gay population is extremely difficult. It is a subpopulation which cannot be counted because there are no statistics available to count.

<sup>8</sup>Examples of the individual and communal compromises that hold First Church together abound. The chair of Kindred Spirits remarked in a committee meeting one night that although he attends First Church regularly, he considers himself a Roman Catholic. Members of the old guard who did not agree with the Open and Affirming decision continue to limit their involvement to church social groups and skip Sunday worship. Because of the congregational focus on heterosexual/homosexual issues, few single heterosexuals have joined First Church and those who have detect little programming to meet their social needs. In spite of First Church's Open and Affirming stance, lesbian and gay church leaders voted against holding a gay/lesbian Valentine's Day dance for fear that the sight of public interaction between same sex partners might overly disturb straight members.

*Are You A Member of  
The Order of Plone-Campbell Fellowship?*

*Those interested in  
the Society's future are.*

## **Books Are Archives**

Many think of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society as a Library and Archives. In reality all of the materials in the Thomas W. Phillips Memorial Building are archives. One of the services provided by the Historical Society is the preservation of the printed word. We maintain the book collection both as a research library for individuals investigating the history of the Campbell-Stone Movement and as an archives preserving the material produced by and about the Movement.

We offer our service of preserving the printed word to authors and publishers. We invite them to submit their publications and manuscripts so we can make them available to researchers and preserve them for posterity. The Christian Board of Publication automatically sends two copies of every book they publish under the imprint of Chalice Press. Standard Publishing Company, The Gospel Advocate Company and Sweet Publishing Company have offered to send any of their publications which we request. Other publishers are served by sending publications written by members of the Movement. We enter the bibliographic data of these works into OCLC (a national library data bank) so libraries around the world know where they can locate the publication.

During 1995 we have received approximately 1000 volumes. These have included histories of congregations, theses and dissertations, histories of the Movement, biographies and works on many subjects not directly related to the Movement but authored or published by members of the Movement. Listed below is a very selected list of recent acquisitions which might give an idea of the types of materials we receive.

Cleland, Thomas. Letters to Barton W. Stone, containing a vindication principally of the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity and atonement of the Saviour against his recent attack in a second edition of his address. (Thomas T. Skillman, 1822)

Garrett, Leroy. The Stone-Campbell Movement. Rev. ed. (College Press, 1994)

Allen, Leonard. Discovering our roots, the ancestry of Church of Christ. (ACU Press, 1988)

Pinola, Sakari. Church growth: principles and praxis of Donald A. McGavran's missiology. (Abo Akademis Forlag, 1995)

Building up the church, a festschrift in honor of Henry E. Webb. (Gary Weedman, 1993)

Guthrie, A. K. Breakup of a Movement: documents from Sand Creek. (Guthrie, 1995)

Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland. Yearbook. (Christian Education Committee of the Fellowship, 1980-)

In celebration of the Chalice Hymnal, the worship program book for the Annual Conference of the Assoc. of Disciples Musicians, 1995 (The Association, 1995)

Hughes, Richard T. and Leonard Allen. Illusions of innocence, Protestant primitivism in America, 1630-1875. (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988)

## ***Just As I Lived It***

*by Lester G. McAllister*

(Recalling events occurring during a 70-plus year fellowship in the Stone-Campbell Movement.)

Those who lived through it can never forget those terrible days in 1923-1924 when the Ku Klux Klan was at the height of its influence. Throughout the South there were frequent lynchings. In 1924 I was witness to the aftermath of such an event.

I remember my father insisting to my mother that he take me to Ninth and Broadway in Little Rock where it was rumored a Negro man's body was to be burned. Earlier in the day he had been lynched, his body tied to the rear of an auto, and then, dragged the length of Broadway.

When my father and I arrived at the scene hoodlums were removing pews from an AME church on the corner, erecting a pyre and pouring gasoline on it. Placing the body on top, they set it afire; a horrible sight to behold, flames leaping high in the darkness.

While unpleasant to recall, it is necessary from time to time to remind ourselves that given the right circumstances such events *can* happen. As young as I was, as a result of witnessing such a horror, respect for human beings of whatever color or creed was impressed indelibly on my mind and soul.

Congregationally governed churches, especially, were susceptible to the influence of the Klan. In the summer of 1925 several Disciples congregations in Little Rock chartered a train to take entire families on a Sunday afternoon to Cabot (about 18 miles away) to a Ku Klux Klan rally, complete with white sheets, hoods and a burning cross. In all about 120 people were on the train including the family of the late Jean Woolfolk and myself. Within a short time more reasonable leaders took over and such an event never took place again.

### **Carol L. Walther**

#### **Lockridge Ward Wilson Award Winner**

The winning historical paper in the Lockridge Ward Wilson Award contest was titled Frank Elon Davidson. Its author was Carol Walther, a student at Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Ft. Worth, TX. The paper was written under the supervision of Professor Mark Toulouse. We congratulate Ms. Walther and Dr. Toulouse for a paper "describing the life of an outstanding minister, it emphasizes his attitude of openness and his personal courage in ministry" said the person judging the papers which were received from five seminaries.

# DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the  
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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JUST AS I LIVED IT

*Lester G. McAllister*



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Disciples of Christ Historical Society was established in 1941 "to maintain and further interest in religious heritage, backgrounds, origins, development, and general history of Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ and related groups."

Members of the Society receive *DISCIPLIANA* quarterly, along with other benefits. Annual membership categories are: Sustaining - \$50 to \$249, Participating - \$25 to \$49, Regular - \$15, Students - \$7.50, Canadian and Overseas - \$20. Single payment Life Memberships are: Life - \$250, Life Link - \$500, Life Patron - \$1,000.

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## —From the Editor's Desk

Dean E. Walker began his career as a Church Historian in the late 1920s as the Disciples-Independent division was emerging. At the root of the division was open membership—the practice of receiving into church membership Christians who had been baptised by some form other than believer's immersion. Charging that the United Christian Missionary Society employed missionaries who supported open membership, Independents withheld offerings to UCMS, choosing, instead, to directly support missionaries who were independent of the Society. This action brought front and center the ecclesiological issue of the relationship of UCMS and other "agencies" to the Disciples of Christ. In short, the question became what bearing one's stance toward UCMS and/or ultimately the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ (forerunner of the General Assembly) had on one's loyalty to the Stone-Campbell movement to restore the unity of the New Testament church. Though Walker steadfastly resisted the separation of Independents and Disciples, he was recognized as an intellectual champion of the Independents. In "The Nature of the Church in the Thought of Dean E. Walker," William J. Richardson discusses Walker's understanding of the marks, norm and unity of the church.

"The Gospel in Urban Vessels: Churches of Christ Face the Twenty-First Century" by Gary Holloway and Michael R. Weed examines the encounter of Churches of Christ with urban culture. Noted consequences of the encounter include the "discovery of grace" that was little more than license to jettison inherited standards, the adoption of therapeutic languages and techniques from psychology, and the current popularity of the Church Growth Movement. Holloway and Weed identify three options taking shape in response to urban culture within Churches of Christ and show how those options relate to Churches of Christ involvement in the broader conflicts over styles and content of worship that are currently evident across nearly all of American religion. This article was first presented to the Second Annual Forrest H. Kirkpatrick Seminar for Stone-Campbell Historians, held in Nashville, May 5-6, 1995 on the theme "From Rural Churches to an Urban World." The general theme of the three-year inaugural series of Kirkpatrick seminars is "How Does a Nineteenth Century North American Religious Movement Face the Twenty-First Century?"

The letter from J.A. Lincoln is the reminiscences of a Texas pioneer preacher addressed to his son Elmer L. Lincoln, October 20, 1916.

Finally, Lester G. McAllister takes us to the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

With this issue the Editorial Committee expresses its appreciation for the hard work, commitment and vision of James M. Seale. His place in the history of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society is secure!

## —From the President's Desk

What an exciting event my retirement celebration was on November 12, 1995! The evening was highlighted by the announcement that you, friends of the Historical Society, have contributed over \$55,000 to the Endowment Fund in recognition of my 46 years of ministry. THANK YOU!

With this issue I write my 52nd column for *Discipliana*. As I look back over the years they feel good like an old shoe that fits. They have been good years bringing me in touch with so many of you the readers of *Discipliana* and members of the Historical Society. For this I am grateful.

During the past 13 years the size of the library has grown by one-third. Today the library holds in excess of 33,000 books. Growth has taken place in many other areas of the library and archives as well. The library has joined the world-wide Online Computer Library Center network and all of our books have been entered with the realization that many of these books were new titles to the network which contains over 33.5 million entries.

More and more of our work is being done through computers. We now have computers at four desks in the Society. With Ed Dodds and David McWhirter working together, we are now on the Internet and are receiving information requests through it.

The quality of *Discipliana* has improved and it has been greatly appreciated across the life of the church. It has doubled in size and has taken on the marks of an excellent journal. Eleven books have been published by the Society with three of them having been published in 1995.

Endowment Funds have grown from \$501,362.00 in 1982 to \$1,635,423.00 as of November 30, 1995. The General Endowment Fund for the Operating Budget has grown from \$400,597.00 to a value of \$1,156,431.00. Eleven new Designated Endowment Funds have been established with a value of \$358,285.00. The number of Named Funds has risen from 72 to 214 for an increase of 142 Named Funds during these 13 years. The number of Life Memberships has increased by 33%.

The Order of the Stone-Campbell Fellowship has been established and recognizes those who have made provision for the Historical Society in their estate planning. From the information provided by some of the persons the value of the gifts to the Society would be close to \$1,000,000.00.

Yet as I look back on my tenure as President the most important part of the association has been with you as Board members, with the many congregations and individuals we have served and the number of donors who have blessed the Society with their gifts and interest. As we look at the Society's current situation the finances are sound, the staff is dedicated, the building is in good shape and the future looks good for the Society under the leadership of Peter Morgan.

## The Nature of The Church in the Thought of Dean E. Walker

by William J. Richardson\*

"You Disciples have chosen high ground." Thus spoke Bishop James Matthews, St Paul's, London, in opening his address to the World Convention of Churches of Christ, Leicester, England (1935). Dean E. Walker often recalled this statement, alluding to it in both personal conversation and in writing.<sup>1</sup> He saw it as recognition that the Disciples<sup>2</sup> view of the church could properly be called catholic: a commitment to unity as essential, intentional, constitutional; possessing a common confession of faith, common sacraments, a common life, and a common mission. They occupied this ground on the basis of appeal to the New Testament as normative. For Walker this meant that "the restoration position is 'Ecumenical thinking.'"<sup>3</sup> Matthews' remark may in part have been recognition of the contribution of William Robinson to Faith and Order discussions on the issue of ministry and sacraments, then as now the most crucial question facing the churches.

Walker was aware of and optimistic about new theological trends in the World Conferences on Faith and Order, at Lausanne (1927) and Edinburgh (1937). Instead of "comparative ecclesiology," where each body laid out its position on the basic issues, there were now proposals to engage in mutual study of Scripture concerning the nature of the church. Equally important was their acknowledgement that Christology is the key to understanding the church. A positive note was struck at Lausanne (1927) when the official report declared that the testimony of revelation "given in Holy Scripture...affords the primary norm for the Church's teaching, worship, and life."<sup>4</sup>

Walker was not alone in his optimism. It was shared by Robinson and also by *Christian Standard* editor, Edwin Errett, who was a delegate representing the International Convention at the Edinburgh Conference (1937). As he observed the trend toward appeal to Scripture as normative Errett turned to his fellow delegate, W. E. Garrison, and said: "Let these people alone—they are doing our work for us."

Walker wanted Disciples to appreciate the relevance of the restoration plea to these developments. For example, in class lectures in the 1940s he identified the marks of the church as follows: name, faith, sacraments, doctrine, ministry, mission. In this matter he did not differ from Faith and Order statements nor from the early Reformers. His point was that our movement is not distinctive in holding a novel understanding of the marks of the church's identity but rather in its appeal to the New Testament as the norm by which the church measures its appropriation of God's gift in Jesus Christ. The church itself is "a gift of God, the Body of Christ" its existence grounded in the incarnation. It finds its criterion in its origins. The church exists for mission. "The Great Commission," he declared, "requires a church." Its order is given and not the product of human contrivance. Only by fidelity to God's given purpose can the church accomplish the mission given to it.<sup>5</sup>

In 1949, in a paper delivered to the Ohio Region Interseminary Conference entitled *The Authority of the Word*, he defined the relation of the Church to God's purpose of restoring man to Himself and to the Word of God as the means of its communication. The Gospel, he declared, is "a creative act of divine revelation by which, in the final act of self-disclosure God overcomes all evil and creates...for Himself a people who respond to Him in faith, love Him in obedience, and worship Him in Truth. ...the content of this Gospel is Jesus Christ himself."<sup>6</sup> He went on to identify the aspects under which God communicates His authority to us, listed in an order determined by "our access to understanding." First is the Word Apostolic, consisting in the "fleshly presence of God's Son" in the midst of the twelve and the teaching entrusted to them. The Word Incarnate is "Jesus Christ the Son" as the "object and subject of revelation." The Word Articulate is "the Word proclaimed, the Gospel spoken." The church is the Word incorporate.

To describe the church in these terms is indeed to occupy "high ground," but this was his firmly held conviction based upon the Biblical characterization of the church as the Body of Christ. "The Church is the divine society manifested to the world...living epistles placarding the Gospel in the Sacraments and the fellowship." Hence "to the degree that this body is utterly responsive to the will of God in its Head, so it is Christ and so it is the Word of God sent to prosecute the mission inaugurated by our Lord." Moreover, to the extent that the church lives in consonance with the will of the Head of the Body—as communicated through the inscribed Word—it conveys his authority, though it is not free to claim authority of itself. However, concern for integrity was not enough. As the Word Incorporate the church must take up Christ's yoke of suffering for the sake of the mission. Walker invoked Paul's description of his own ministry as an apostle (Col. 1:24ff) as applicable to the ministry of the church; "as the Word Incarnate had to expend itself in sacrifice, so the Word Incorporate must make up in its members what is lacking in the suffering of Christ."<sup>7</sup>

It remained for Walker to state the relation of the Bible to these four aspects of the Word: "the written word of God is the exclusive medium and norm over the language of God's authority." As such it is authoritative for the church, "in that it expresses the attested will of him from whom the written word comes." It required no special historical insight to recognize that the church was not created by the written word; the church's existence preceded that of the written word. But the nature of the church is "reflected" in that word. Equally important, the Word attested in the written word was not the creation of the church. The church's role is that of preserving the Word while at the same time submitting to its judgment in faith and life.

Walker never retreated from his commitment to the restoration idea. But he confronted new challenges that called for greater elaboration and refinement of his articulation of the plea. One challenge took the form of denying the validity of the concept of restoration. The Bible, it was said, is a human product the shape and form of whose writings was

determined “by the forces of the age and culture out of which they came.” It is but a “reflection of human experience in contact with their idea of God.” Hence it is not possible to find a structured church in the New Testament. Moreover, our knowledge of history is so relative—“conditioned by subjective elements”—that we cannot look to the New Testament to contain objective truth in matters of faith, order, life. Hence the church today is free to create its own structure, and the movement stemming from the labors of Stone and Campbell should undertake a reformation of its tradition.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time certain elements in the ecumenical movement advanced the notion that tradition, as the “total life of the church,” is the norm of the church. This position allowed for developments in the history of the church to become valid points of reference for shaping the structure of the church today, an approach which coincided, in Walker’s view, with the tendency to regard unity as organizational.

In response, Walker noted that in ecumenical circles and amongst liberal Disciples the confession “Jesus is Lord” was universally acknowledged. He used this fact as an occasion to assert that restoration properly understood is a valid implication of that confession: If Jesus is Lord the church must live in faithfulness to him. Only the Apostles’ testimony and teaching (the “Tradition of Christ”) now inscribed in the New Testament can guide the church in obedience to her Lord and secure to the church the unity needed for the conversion of the world.

One observes in Walker’s addresses and writings throughout his career a variety in description of the principle of restoration. His interest was not in simply defending a motto, much less in prideful assertion that we have restored the New Testament church. Rather, the motifs of restoration and unity were so central to the Biblical message as to demand equal faithfulness. The notion that one might opt for unity in preference to restoration or vice versa was not a legitimate consideration. This is because restoration is but another term for the mission of God. The restoration movement did not begin in America in the early part of the nineteenth century;” it “began in Eden when God set out to find the man he’d lost and restore him to the majesty of His person.”<sup>9</sup> Restoration consists in “measures to recover whatever has been distorted or lost.”<sup>10</sup>

I. The goal is “the restoration of men to the status, quality, and life for which God made them.”<sup>11</sup> Attendant to this recovery and as an aspect of it is the restoration of fellowship. In the “history of redemption the idea of restoration of divine fellowship is a continuing theme.... The major theme of the entire thread of the Biblical discourse...is, God created man, He loves that man, even though he be at enmity with God, and God endeavors to reach man in various ways in order to restore him to the fellowship from which he has been estranged.”<sup>12</sup> This is the meaning of the incarnation: “the coming of the Son of God to earth to meet man in his human flesh...to undertake a new creation within that man which will restore to him the fellowship for which God has longed.”<sup>13</sup>

II. The church is the instrument for fulfilling the purpose consummated when the Word became flesh. Faithfulness to its given character is essential both to the integrity of its own life and to its carrying out its vocation. A church divided fails the gift and intention of her Lord and inadequately fulfills the mission committed to her trust. A church dependent upon the “crutch of state authorization and support” lacks vitality in its life.<sup>14</sup> A church distorted in faith, order, and life fails to exhibit the Gospel that brought it forth. Restoration therefore involves the church. The plea of our movement is “to restore to the church that faith, order, and life which distinguished the disciples of Christ who knew Him in the days of His flesh.”<sup>15</sup> It does not mean a “return to the first century to identify its nature and forms within that past culture” but is rather a “summons” of the first century “to testify to nature and form as Christ gave.”<sup>16</sup> Restoration is an appeal to origins to find the genius of the church, to recover the mind of Christ respecting the church.<sup>17</sup> Restoration is thus a “plea to occupy catholic ground.”<sup>18</sup>

III. There is also an eschatological dimension to the Gospel and hence to the plea for restoration. As the disclosure of and restorer of the image of God given to man in creation Jesus is the model of what we are to be. Early on Walker wrote: “The Jesus we see in the New Testament and the Society there set forth, is not behind us in time so much as before us. There is a goal, and a norm, and a spirit of aspiration, discovered in and generated in us through the New Testament.”<sup>19</sup> So, whether we consider the nature of the church in terms of its origins or in terms of the goal to which it aspires Christ is the source and norm of its life. The New Testament embodies in human language the witness concerning the Word of God incarnate—Jesus and His Teaching—and the response of men to that witness, and so is normative. “There is,” he declared, “no conflict of loyalty between the written word and the incarnate word.”<sup>20</sup>

In Walker’s view the nature of the church could not be separated from considerations of norm derived from its origins. His understanding of the person and mission of Christ totally determined his view of the church.<sup>21</sup> The church may resemble human societies in many appearances, but it differs from them in spirit, in order, in origin, and in structure and control.<sup>22</sup> The church is a created society whose existence is grounded in the acts of God in Christ. Central to this understanding are the prophetic, priestly, teaching roles of Christ—as revelator, redeemer, and Lord over the disciplined life of believers. Jesus is revelator of God but also reveals and restores man to true humanity. This is the meaning of conversion: being “born into humanity.”<sup>23</sup> Jesus is the teacher and the model of the life of faith; “man liberated to the authority of Christ can change the conditions of earthly life into instruments of creative service to God and fellow man.”<sup>24</sup> Jesus—in his person and deeds—is the Gospel. The church is “called into being...by the personal response of individuals to the summons of the Gospel.”<sup>25</sup> This description of the new life coincides with the prophetic, priestly, and teaching offices of Jesus: a “life conceived by the Word of God through hearing the Gospel and born in the act of baptism, nourished

in the eucharist, and summarized in the concepts of discipleship, stewardship, and fellowship."<sup>26</sup> Thus does God reconstitute his family, whose fellowship was broken by the "intervention of sin." The church is best understood in terms of familial relationship.

While the church's existence is grounded in the incarnation it is necessitated also by the Great Commission. The church represents Christ "as preacher, priest, and teacher."<sup>27</sup> The Church...is faithful to the trust of God given in the Tradition of Christ when it engages, first, in the preaching of the Gospel; second, in offering, as the royal priesthood, the sacraments of baptism and the communion of the eucharist, to all in faith who present themselves for the reception of these rites; and third, in the discipline of Christ..."<sup>28</sup>

Preaching the Gospel takes priority, but the mission extends to other matters as well. The people of God, though not of the world, "must move and live this present life in the context of the world.... The idea that some of life is sacred and some of it secular is foreign to the New Testament and repugnant to Christ."<sup>29</sup>

Walker's view of ministry flowed from the same commitment and understanding of the New Testament that guided his thought in dealing with other major issues, namely, the meaning of our identity in Christ. To be restored to true humanity, to be part of the Body of Christ, is to be in the royal priesthood and to engage in acts "rightly applied as priestly:" 1. The priest may receive the confession of faith of the convert. 2. In baptism "the priest and confessor appear before God in an Act (immersion) in which the Father pledges his blessing and the gift of the Holy Spirit and the inquirer pledges filial obedience...." 3. "The new born in Christ have need of one more priestly service, that of the Table of the Lord...where He is Host." Believers as priests "act for the Host." Walker was aware of the implications of this understanding of the New Testament view of ministry; "any of the Priesthood of believers," he wrote, "may serve for Christ in the Supper."<sup>30</sup>

Deriving from the congregation as the royal priesthood are the ministries of persons who are asked to devote themselves specifically to these and other functions. However, no special sanctity or powers attach to the person of ones so engaged or to the ordination service in which they are "set apart." Nor is remuneration for service an indicator of the "intrinsic worth" of a particular ministry. The "ordained" minister is doing nothing any qualified disciple might not do.<sup>31</sup>

While he acknowledged all the varied images used of the church in the Bible, two stood out for Walker as most descriptive of the genius of the church considered in the light of its origins and its God-given mission. One was that of the Family of God, describing our relation to God as Father and to fellow believers as brethren. He regarded this as the "primary concept."<sup>32</sup> "The Christian relation is genetic," he once remarked. He regarded this image of the church as primary because the familial concept "rests in God's creation of humanity in His own image."<sup>33</sup>

Body of Christ, on the other hand, is an image reflecting the church's mission. The church as the Word Incorporated is an "extension of the Incarnation," although, he was careful to say, not a continuation of revelation itself. "As the Word Incarnate is delineated in the Word inscribed, so it is incorporated in the Church through the inhabitation of each believer by the Holy Spirit. The believer is a person charged with introducing persons to the person of Christ."<sup>34</sup>

Thus, from whichever aspect the church is considered—its origins or its mission—the marks of the church are the same: faith, sacrament, doctrine, ministry. This was not a contrived scheme but a relationship Walker viewed as flowing naturally from the nature of the Gospel itself. The focus of each of these marks is Christ. Thus does the basic character of the church as a social entity differ from other social organisms. Furthermore, the Gospel is the criterion by which we examine "worship, ministry, work and polity" of the church. Walker proposed three tests: "How does this concept and practice exalt Christ? How does it reflect His Mind and Purpose? Do we by this exhibit the Christ within us?"<sup>35</sup>

In *Renewal Through Recovery* (1967) Walker devoted a section to "The Biblical Idea of the Church" in which he defined the church as "a community held together by one thing possessed in common...commitment and dedication to Christ the Lord." This relationship defined for him the meaning of the ancient characterizations of the church as One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic. He understood these terms in the light of Christ's person and mission as the fulfillment of God's purpose.

I. The church is holy. Each believer as well as the congregation is "holy—that is, whole, complete, in the sense of being wholly owned by God, dedicated to Him, by personal commitment of each, and receiving the life which God seeks to bestow upon each of His children. Thus, a Christian is a saint."

II. The church is the people of God. This usage reflects "the nature and mission of the church.... As God could not reveal Himself except through the Person of His Son, so He cannot accomplish His purpose in the cosmos apart from a people whom He seeks and accepts as His own—The People of God..."

III. The church is one. It possesses a unity based on the relation of believers to Christ, hence a relation to each other "characterized by analogies of Christ the vine with each Christian a branch...and...Jesus as the good shepherd who has one flock," but "most strikingly portrayed by...the term 'body of Christ.'"<sup>36</sup>

Unity is both vertical (with God) and horizontal (with fellow believers). It is created neither by creeds (theology) nor by organization,<sup>37</sup> nor can we "find" it in political or social devices. But we can receive it from its Author, that gift Christ brought to us in His incarnation..."<sup>38</sup>

IV. The church is apostolic. Here he was referring to the unique mission of the Twelve. Apostolicity meant two things. First, their witness to the risen Christ evoked faith in him. Their word guided the obedience of believers, hence brought the church into being. Their

teaching guided the life of believers individually and corporately.<sup>39</sup> They continue to serve this role in the church through the inscribed Word. Second, the apostles' commission was not to be administrators but "Proclaimers, Baptizers, and Teachers." This commission was extended to the Church.<sup>40</sup> The church is apostolic in so far as it lives by the Word Apostolic and extends the apostolic mission. This is the true apostolic succession.

The church is characterized also by the "holiness of the Body through the gift of the Holy Spirit."<sup>41</sup> The Spirit animates the church and affords divine discernment: "The Spirit illuminates both Christ and His Teaching." Moreover, the communion of the Spirit brings life to the worship and mission of the church.<sup>42</sup>

Walker recognized the church as both local and catholic. The congregation is "a gathering of believers in a given place and set in order for the worship and service of God."<sup>43</sup> The church catholic consists of all believers of all places and of all time. Catholic, however, also refers to the quality of universality itself. This quality is present in the congregation. "Every character of the Church universal is found in the congregation local. Walker noted with some satisfaction that this truth had been acknowledged at Vatican II.<sup>44</sup> The statement, "The catholic must be local to be real," could as much have been Walker's as that of the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order (Montreal, 1963).

He was not defending congregation-ism. There is no way to justify an outlook and concern oblivious to wider fraternal bonds and responsibilities. But the church considered as the totality of all believers requires no structure for its expression such as "an order analogous to that of the civil government."<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, the congregation is indispensable to consideration of the nature of the church. All the "distinguishing marks" of the church are present in the congregation; the ecclesia "is exhibited first and essentially in the assembly of Christians to whom are committed the gospel, the sacraments, and the discipline."<sup>46</sup> In addition, all the seven unitive gifts identified in Ephesians 4:1-6 are present in the congregation.<sup>47</sup> It is here that believers experience the oneness that is Christ's gift or the brokenness that results when believers are not receptive to it.

Finally, the congregation is essential to the mission as the "necessary structure for the reception and transmission" of the tradition of Christ. The Gospel, the Sacraments, the Discipline serve both to identify the church and to define her mission. The congregation is the necessary structure "by means of which they (the people of God) can engage in the execution of this trust."<sup>48</sup>

Very important to Walker was the conviction that beyond the congregation there is no necessary structure for the church—either to constitute the church catholic or its unity or as the means of expediting the Christian mission. Christians are free to associate in causes of mutual interest in fulfilling their vision of how to carry out their commitment to the mission of Christ. He cited examples of this in the New Testament. He offered criteria that should guide the formation of such associa-

tions,<sup>49</sup> but denied that brotherhood should depend upon agreement in the propriety of the means chosen by associates in a given organization. Believers are brothers in virtue of their relation to Christ, not in agreement in the means of carrying out the mission.<sup>50</sup> Let each association elicit support on the basis of its perceived merit. Such associations must be voluntary, a conviction he expressed as follows: "This concept [of oneness with each other based on our oneness with Christ] does not preclude the responsible organization of churches or of individual Christians in the prosecution of Christian enterprise, but it does preclude the authoritative nature of such associations. All Christian activity must take its roots from morality if it is to be just before God and...nothing can be moral that is not voluntary."<sup>51</sup>

In summary: the church is a community of persons restored to God and thence to true humanity through the revelatory and redemptive acts of God in Christ. It is characterized by Brotherhood, Mission, Priesthood; it is the Family of God, united in worship of the Father; it is the Body of Christ, engaged in his mission, "completing his Proclamation of the Gospel to...all cultures, in all nations;" it is a priesthood performing services in which Christ is made visible to the world.<sup>52</sup> Each aspect of its identity derives from and receives its character from the person and offices of Christ. Only in faithfulness to Christ, as measured by the apostolic word inscribed in Scripture, can the Church be true to its identity and fulfill its mission to the world.

For Walker the test of any doctrine is, can it be lived? This rule applied to the doctrine of the church as to any other doctrine. If the structure of the church is given to God's people "by our Lord himself," he wrote, "appropriation of the gift has significant bearing on other aspects of the Christian life."<sup>53</sup> Therein lay the importance of the New Testament doctrine of the church. The nature of the community of faith to which they have been added is inseparably linked to the self-understanding of believers, their day to day decisions, and their attitude toward the world God created and yet seeks to restore to himself.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>"The Name 'Shane'," *Shane Quarterly*, (Jan., 1940), 27.

<sup>2</sup>Walker regularly used the term "Disciples": 1) he accepted Campbell's argument for its validity; 2) he did not want the term preempted by any wing of the movement; 3) he regretted its pejorative use by some "Independents."

<sup>3</sup>"The Name 'Shane'," 31-32; cf. his article "Alexander Campbell—Ecumenical Theologian," *Christian Standard*, (17 Sept., 1938).

<sup>4</sup>Report, 229; Walker took note of these developments in *Christian Standard* (13 May, 1939) and "The North American Christian Convention," *Shane Quarterly*, (Jan., 1942), 65-72.

<sup>5</sup>Class lectures: Introduction to Church History; Nineteenth Century Reformation (1944-1946).

<sup>6</sup>*Authority of the Word*, 11.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 13-19.

<sup>8</sup>*The Tradition of Christ*, Milligan College Press (1963), was written in response to this position.

<sup>9</sup>"NACC Objectives Viewed Historically," North American Committee Meeting (Oct., 1973).

<sup>10</sup>"Validity of the Restoration Idea," *European Evangelist* (June, 1966), 1-2.

<sup>11</sup>*Renewal Through Recovery*, Kentucky Christian College Press (1981), 4. Note: pages 3 and 10 are inverted in this volume.

<sup>12</sup>*Tradition of Christ*.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>"Our Message of Unity in a World of Denominational Union," *Christian Standard* (5 April., 1941), 12-13.

<sup>15</sup>*The Tradition of Christ*. Walker's use of the phrase "restore to the church" was deliberate; he did not view restoration as a "repudiation of anything of value in past Christian experience," "The Name 'Shane,'" 30.

<sup>16</sup>"Authority," *Christian Educator's Journal* (Summer, 1971), 6.

<sup>17</sup>*Renewal Through Recovery*, 1-2.

<sup>18</sup>"We have a Plea—Do we not," North American Convention Committee (1983).

<sup>19</sup>"The Name 'Shane,'" 30.

<sup>20</sup>*Tradition of Christ*.

<sup>21</sup>For example, in his seminar: "The nature of the Church" students were assigned several papers each devoted to an analysis of a pericope taken from the Gospels, with a view to asking, "what may be evinced about the nature and mission of the church from this passage?" Later assignments asked the same question of the contents of the Acts and the Epistles.

<sup>22</sup>*Authority of the Word*, 19.

<sup>23</sup>*Renewal Through Recovery*, 2.

<sup>24</sup>"Authority," *Christian Educator's Journal* (Summer, 1971), 4.

<sup>25</sup>*Tradition of Christ*.

<sup>26</sup>"The Anatomy of Christian Unity," *Christian Standard*, (18 Jan., 1964), 5-6.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Tradition of Christ*.

<sup>29</sup>"Anatomy of Christian Unity," *Christian Standard* (25 Jan., 1964), 5.

<sup>30</sup>"Alpha and Omega in Restoration: sub specie aeternitas," Mark Kraus, ed., *Essays on the Restoration Plea in honor of Dr. Harold W. Ford*, (1988).

<sup>31</sup>"What is the Ministry," *Christian Standard* (18 Jan., 1941), 7.

<sup>32</sup>*Tradition of Christ*.

<sup>33</sup>"Opportunities for Brotherhood," *European Evangelist* (Sept., 1965).

<sup>34</sup>"The Validity of the Restoration Idea," *European Evangelist* (June, 1966), 1-2.

<sup>35</sup>"The Validity of the Restoration Idea," *European Evangelist* (July, 1966), 1-2.

<sup>36</sup>*Renewal Through Recovery*, 6-9.

<sup>37</sup>"Validity of the Restoration Idea," *European Evangelist* (June, 1966), 1-2.

<sup>38</sup>"Restoration?...Unity?...Mission," *Fellowship* (March, 1974), 12.

<sup>39</sup>*Renewal Through Recovery*, 9

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 9

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>43</sup>*Tradition of Christ*.

<sup>44</sup>"NACC Objectives Viewed Historically," 3. Cf. *Renewal Through Recovery*, 11.

<sup>45</sup>*Renewal Through Recovery*, 5.

<sup>46</sup>"Anatomy of Christian Unity," *Christian Standard* (25 Jan., 1964), 5.

<sup>47</sup>"Alpha and Omega in Restoration: sub specie aeternitas."

<sup>48</sup>*Tradition of Christ*.

<sup>49</sup>"Validity of the Restoration Idea," *European Evangelist* (June 1966), 1-2. Walker was president of the European Evangelistic Society, an agency reporting to the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ.

<sup>50</sup>"We Have a Plea--Do We Not?" North American Christian Convention Committee (1983).

<sup>51</sup>Letter to this writer. (1951).

<sup>52</sup>"Alpha and Omega in Restoration: sub specie aeternitas."

<sup>53</sup>*Tradition of Christ.*

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## Book Are Archives, Continued

(The following listing of recent acquisitions at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society is a continuation of the article begun on page 95 of *Discipliana* 55:3.)

- Gresham, Perry E. Growing up in the ranchland, heartwarming memoirs of life in a simpler, slower-paced era. (Gaddy Printing Co., 1994)
- Gresham, Perry E. The sign of the golden grasshopper, a biography of Sir Thomas Gresham. (Jameson Books, 1994)
- The original Gospel Guardian (1935-1936) and the Bible Banner (1938-1949), indexed by author and subject, compiled by Terry J. Gardner with a biographical sketch of Cled E. Wallace. (Terry Gardner, 1994)
- Vinck, Honore. The influence of colonial ideology on schoolbooks in the Belgian Congo (manuscript, 199?)
- Layman, Marvin V. Bartlesons of Grand Chain. (True Image Printing, 1995)
- Robinson, William. Holy baptism and holy communion, rev. by Charles R. Gresham. (Kentucky Christian College Press, 1995)
- Hamlin, Griffith. The Missouri School of Religion. (Missouri School of Religion, 1994)
- Thrash, Catherine Hyacinth. The onliest one alive: surviving Jonestown, Guyana, as told to Marian K. Towne. (Towne, 1995)
- Cowan, Terry. The Stone Movement and "the Christians in the West" in Texas. (MA. Thesis, University of Texas at Tyler, 1994)
- Clark, Randolph. Reminiscences, a facsimile reproduction of the book published in 1919. (Texas Christian University Press, 1979)
- Clark, Champ memorial addresses delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, March 3, 1921. (Government Printing Office, 1922)
- Bryan, Joseph Harris. The what, why and how of Sunday school work. (Standard Publishing Co., 1898)
- Reagan, David R. Crucial questions concerning the second coming of Jesus. (Lamb and Lion Ministries, 1994)
- Woodson, William. Change agents and churches of Christ. (School of Bible Emphasis, 1994)
- Ellas, John W. Clear choices for churches. (Center for Church Growth, 1994)
- A prophecy fulfilled, 1910-1995: Missions Building closing, January 30, 1995. (Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 1995)

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# **The Gospel in Urban Vessels: Churches of Christ Face the Twenty-First Century**

by \*Gary Holloway and \*\*Michael R. Weed

[T]here is a middle ground between the “progressive” surrender to the age and the fundamentalist denial of it. The first only “reads,” the latter only “writes.” Or...the one listens and has nothing to say, the other speaks without ever having listened. It seems to me Christian wisdom must always encompass both attitudes.

Peter L. Berger

Churches of Christ in America were born in a rural, largely Southern culture. This supporting ethos has drastically changed. Even the most isolated settlement is now shaped by the carriers of modern urban culture—pop music, computers, television and video. The impact of urbanization upon Churches of Christ is complex. The prospects posed for Churches of Christ continuing to exist in and minister to modern urbanized Americans is an even more challenging subject. We will approach that subject in three steps. First, we give a brief discussion of urbanization and urban consciousness. Second, we attempt to trace in broad strokes the interaction with and impact of urbanization upon Churches of Christ. Next, we identify three approaches to urban culture that are currently influential among church members. Only then will we give what we see as prospects for the future.

## **Urbanization**

While urbanization may pose new problems, in many ways the theological problems it raises for Christian existence are quite old. The apostle Paul asserts that we have God’s truth in “earthen vessels.” This means not only that the gospel is incarnate in human bodies; it is also embodied in human society and culture. Succinctly, not only is the church in society, society is also in the church. Hence North American Christians are more likely to prefer baseball to bullfighting. On a deeper level, the society or culture that is variously reflected in contemporary American churches is an urban culture. And, insofar as it shapes the outlook and self-understanding of modern Christians, it saturates them with a particular kind of consciousness: “urban consciousness.”

“Urbanization” designates a complex socio-economic process that has been a major force in the shaping of Western society for the past eight centuries. As with all such processes, no simple definition nor easy identification of contributing causes is possible. Obviously, in its basic meaning urbanization designates the development of large concentrations of population in urban areas. Associated with this is the development of an outlook, a particular way of understanding reality, and a style of living and of relating to others, that is, an urban culture.

In America urbanization did not become a major influence until the 1880s when Americans in unprecedented numbers moved from rural villages and towns to cities.<sup>1</sup> It was during this period, and in large part as a result of urbanization, that American culture also underwent

significant changes. As had been the case in Europe, American urbanization was accompanied by secularization. City life was unfriendly, even hostile, to the ethos that had evolved to reflect and support Christian (chiefly Protestant) values and practices. Anonymity, erosion of community ties, new distractions and diversions, and other attendant features of urbanization all served to diminish church loyalties. Further, the influx of European Roman Catholic immigrants with different lifestyles that included drinking, gambling, and dancing, forced the reality of religious pluralism.<sup>2</sup>

It was also during the period following the Civil War that urbanization's secularizing effect was felt at an institutional level as several of society's major components were removed from religious influence. Higher education, economic life, and politics all drifted free from their place and function within the Protestant hegemony that had earlier evolved.

Some churches resisted the threats of urbanization and secularization and in fact achieved degrees of success. Their successes, however, were misleading. External numerical and monetary growth only obscured deeper and more fundamental internal problems.<sup>3</sup> Ironically, the churches themselves were becoming secularized in part by adopting the methods and outlook of the surrounding urban culture. Superficial solutions were accompanied by a subtle but critical shift from faith in God to confidence in human capabilities, strategies, and techniques to direct and manage evangelism and the church.

Thus American churches were forced to survive in an urban and secularizing culture. In the very act of surviving, they took on many of the characteristics, values, and practices of the surrounding urban secular culture. In the twentieth century, both the process of urbanization and the threats of secularization have intensified. In particular, the twin engines of modernity—bureaucracy and technology—have become chief carriers of modern urban secular culture and modern consciousness.

### **Urban Consciousness**

As indicated, urbanization and its companion, secularization, have both external and internal (or subjective) dimensions. Thus, urbanization not only describes a socio-economic process, it also describes a psychological process.

In America, urbanization has become so intertwined with the forces of modernity, that it is virtually impossible to distinguish between urban and modern consciousness. For our purposes then, urban consciousness is modern consciousness.

From early studies, urbanization has been linked to forms of individualism. The city offered freedom and opportunity: freedom from inhibiting restrictions of traditional culture, and opportunity for the enterprising to achieve success. For many, no doubt, this dream was realized. And yet, for nearly a century, sociologists (such as Durkheim and Weber) have noted a darker side of urbanization. The urban dream could become a

nightmare. Urban, industrial, bureaucratic, technological society could become an insensitive impersonal and mechanical “iron cage,” hostile to the heart’s deepest longings and aspirations. Terms like “disenchantment” and “anomie” have been employed to designate the negative impacts of modern urban-secular-bureaucratic-technological society upon its inhabitants. Countless studies have analyzed the impact of modernity in forming a “modern outlook” or “temper.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1985 Robert Bellah and his associates in their sociological study, *Habits of the Heart*, traced the imprint of urbanization and its traveling companions—industrialization and secularization—upon the American heart.<sup>5</sup> Bellah and company, who distinguish between “high” or intellectual culture and popular culture, argue that life on the level of popular culture in metropolitan America is impersonal. Urbanization erodes social responsibility and commitment to the public good. Moreover, societal structures ranging from economic to educational institutions have become specialized and fragmented. This fragmentation has as its internal or subjective corollary the loss of stability and coherence—a disconnectedness. In brief, Bellah et. al. identified what they termed a pervasive “ontological individualism” in which individuation and separation have become complete. In the modern urban culture the individual is the only firm reality.<sup>6</sup>

For the authors of *Habits*, cultural disintegration is presently forestalled by two forms of “pseudo-integration”: the dream of personal success and attention to feelings.<sup>7</sup> First, the dream of personal success is a drama, promoted by countless television shows, with which virtually all middle-class Americans, in spite of their isolation, can identify. This dream paradoxically provides a somewhat shared vision of individual, private success. Second, personal feeling and intense emotions, variously portrayed and evoked by television shows, offers a shallow kind of shared meaning: “feelings unite us, thinking might separate us.”

While *Habits* expressed guarded optimism regarding “high culture’s” promise in countering, if not correcting, some of these trends, philosopher Charles Taylor paints a grimmer picture in his *Sources of the Self and The Ethics of Authenticity*.<sup>8</sup> For Taylor, urbanization (technology, bureaucracy, mobility, and so on) has fostered a kind of “social atomism” in which all relations are instrumental and subservient to personal fulfillment driven by truncated visions of the human. The postmodern loss or abandonment of an independent ontic order, or access to such, has far-reaching consequences. The self is simply a center of freedom and power in a world without legitimate restraints or external standards.<sup>9</sup>

For Taylor, this high culture filters down to popular culture, strengthening and justifying the most extreme forms of self-centeredness. The social and intellectual carriers of this orientation are not abating; “the future,” Taylor states, “appears to promise only ever-increasing levels of narcissism.”<sup>10</sup>

Thus the modern American urban ethos and the consciousness it transmits—“ontological individualism,” or “social atomism”—is one of

expansive, pragmatic, affective egoism. It is this urban cultural environment in which modern churches exist.

### **Churches of Christ and Urbanization**

Churches of Christ were among numerous religious groups who experienced exceptional growth in the years after World War II. This period was one of primarily urban growth and it offers a convenient point (the early 1950s) from which to date significant interaction between Churches of Christ and modern urbanization. For convenience's sake, we will divide this era of urbanization since World War II into two periods of roughly twenty-five years each. The first period (1945 to 1970) is one of extensive but unintentional urbanization. The second period (1970 to the present) has seen the deliberate adoption by some of strategies and methods designed to accommodate belief and practice to the modern urban ethos.

*Unintentional urbanization (1945-1970).* The war years were an occasion for Church of Christ servicemen to carry the Church of Christ formula for Restoration out of the South and Southwest. This was a prelude to the extensive growth of the 1950s when Churches of Christ not only moved into the cities, but also began to move across the tracks. Christian colleges simultaneously provided a "Christian education," while equipping students for success in professions pursued in an increasingly urban and secular society.

The most significant theological insight of this period was the "discovery of grace" and rejection of sectarianism and legalism by some in larger urban Churches of Christ.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, this "discovery of grace," was set within an otherwise undeveloped theology and proved no match for the urbanization process. "Grace" tended to legitimate practices more amenable to the urban lifestyle. In many Churches of Christ, grace simply meant acceptance of the lowering of inherited standards on matters such as social drinking, entertainment options, and church attendance.

Other changes unintentionally accommodated urban culture. Urban churches ceased to call "evangelists" to pulpits. Educated "ministers" were sought. Those preparing for ministry were frequently encouraged to avoid seminary and pursue advanced degrees in subjects such as speech. The assumption was that they did not need theology, but did need to learn strategies, techniques, and skills for communicating to the modern age. On the whole, ministers were sought who would not offend newly developed urban sensibilities and "denominational neighbors." Urban churches obtained ministers who "softened the corners" of the earlier preaching of fundamentals. Echoes of Harry Emerson Fosdick and Clovis Chappell were heard in numerous big city Church of Christ pulpits. In short, urban churches sought urbane ministers.

By the late 1960s most churches of any size had specialized ministries (e.g., pulpit, education, youth, involvement, etc.). Church "staffs" ap-

peared along with CEO-type responsibilities for many ministers serving as “chief of staff.” Bureaucratic and technological organizational structures and procedures followed suit (e.g., “flow charts,” and “five year plans”). During this period “gospel meetings,” long a staple of Church of Christ evangelism, began to disappear among urban churches. Evangelism was replaced with “outreach” and “the lost” became “the unchurched.”

Of course this process of urbanization was uneven. There were still many congregations that clung tenaciously to their exclusivist identity as the only Christians. However even leaders in those congregations realized the powerful effects of urbanization on Churches of Christ (although they would not put it in those terms). Thus, their repeated warnings that the Churches of Christ were “drifting” from their beliefs and practices of the 1920s and 1930s.

Churches during this period enjoyed the mixed blessing of a hospitable culture that still was at least partially “Christian.” This friendly environment permitted inattention to many basic beliefs of the Christian faith because it was simply assumed “everyone believes that.” By 1970 however, this friendly culture was disappearing. It was becoming clear that one could no longer assume that Americans knew their Bibles or the basic doctrines of the Christian faith.

*Intentional urbanization (1970-Present).* By the early 1970s several influences contributed to the Churches of Christ adopting strategies and techniques that would intentionally accommodate both faith and practice to the urban ethos and modern outlook of expansive, pragmatic, affective egoism.

Like other religious groups, many Church of Christ congregations began to reflect the “triumph of the therapeutic” in American culture at large. Ministers were encouraged to tailor messages to touch people where they were hurting. Ministers learned pastoral counseling to meet the needs of members suffering from countless personal and relationship problems. Christian ministry itself came to be seen as one of the helping professions. Significantly, in this attempt to become more relevant and to help people, Churches of Christ, like other religious groups, further weakened their grasp of the Christian tradition’s deep resources available for pastoral care. A theological vacuum was being filled with therapeutic languages and techniques stemming from a modern urban identity.<sup>12</sup>

Another influence that gained ground among Churches of Christ in this era was the Church Growth Movement and its uses of the social sciences (cultural anthropology and sociology) in analyzing evangelistic methods and strategies.<sup>13</sup> Insights taken from Church Growth specialists, not always accompanied by the best theological foundations, were widely discussed and applied. Arguably, this influence in Churches of Christ and other religious groups represents both an intentional and an unintentional accommodation of Christian faith, specifically methods of

evangelism, to the contemporary utilitarian, pragmatic, success-oriented, technique-obsessed age.

Two other more theoretical or even academic influences on Churches of Christ during this period were insights from modern critical biblical scholarship and methods of modern historiography. In time, these two influences would join in fundamentally altering the theological and intellectual framework underlying and guiding Church of Christ approaches to Restoration.

Under the impact of biblical studies, the concept of a single, cohesive New Testament theology, much less a clear and uniform doctrine of the church (so fundamental for Church of Christ theology), came under serious question. The New Testament writings were seen to contain a number of theologies and different views of the church. "Diversity" became the watchword. The cry of "unity in diversity" tended simply to legitimate diversity. Attempts to define and restore the New Testament church were quietly discarded by many as pre-critical and naive.<sup>14</sup>

More recently, Church of Christ histories of the nineteenth century American Restoration movement and its precursors have also emphasized diversity. Partially in response to earlier hagiographic treatments of the subject, these new histories have pointed out the weaknesses of Church of Christ approaches to Restoration (such as its historical naivete) and the illusory nature of all restorationist schemes.<sup>15</sup> The Stone-Campbell movement was presented as just one of many American attempts at primitivism and an impulse fed by widely diverse social and intellectual roots.<sup>16</sup> Diversity and even tensions within the Restoration ideal were illustrated by contrasting Alexander Campbell with Barton W. Stone. Campbell, on the one hand, is the excessively rational, this-worldly theorist, preoccupied with the forms and structures of the primitive church. Stone, on the other hand, is the spiritual and apocalyptic leader, concerned with freedom from dogma, form, and structure and encouraging a life of simple holiness.<sup>17</sup>

Under the impact of these forces, the framework—biblical, theological, and intellectual—housing Church of Christ approaches to Restoration became dismantled at both ends. On the one end, there was no coherent New Testament theology and no unified picture, much less theology, of the New Testament church. On the other end, there was no clear, unique Restoration ideal. Now many would ask not only, "Which church do you restore, Thessalonica or Corinth?" but also "Which Restoration movement do you follow, Campbell's or Stone's?"

### **The Current Ferment: A Search for Direction**

Not surprisingly, the above mentioned influences, combined with the powerful forces of modern urban culture, leave contemporary Churches of Christ in a situation marked by considerable ferment. Within this context, we can identify at least three fairly definite options taking shape within Churches of Christ.<sup>18</sup>

Obviously there are those who react against most of the developments that have occurred within Churches of Christ over the past quarter

century and against most developments within modern society as well. These voices tend to be linked primarily with rural churches and a few long-standing publications that regularly print diatribes against Christian colleges, various new publications, and “liberalism” in general.<sup>19</sup> These voices do not appear to be particularly effective or persuasive in Churches of Christ at large. They do not comprehend the forces at work in society, in Churches of Christ in general, or even those shaping their own situation. While they may continue to increase the volume and rancor of their attacks, their inflexibility, sheer negativity, and lack of genuine biblical, theological, and cultural insights will limit their influence within mainstream Churches of Christ.

A more influential force that has recently emerged is that of voices calling for Churches of Christ to adapt extensively and intentionally to modern urban culture. Proponents of this view (some of whom refer to their role as “change agents”<sup>20</sup>) argue that the Churches of Christ must change significantly in order to meet the needs created by urbanization and modern urban consciousness or it will simply become irrelevant and die. This movement is driven in part by a concern for evangelism and a perception that Churches of Christ are not growing numerically as much as they once did. To grow, they argue, Churches of Christ must change certain practices, particularly worship forms, in order to “connect” with modern urban culture.<sup>21</sup>

Thus Churches of Christ currently find themselves drawn into the broader worship wars that characterize virtually all American religion from the synagogue to the cathedral. Clearly the issues that cluster here reflect both theological and cultural concerns. How far can Christian worship adapt to the needs of urbanized Americans with their affective, non-cognitive, entertainment-oriented, self-preoccupied, uncommitted consciousness?

Two models for worship changes are most evident among Churches of Christ. One is the seeker service model of the Willow Creek Community Church. A few influential congregations have implemented a separate seeker service. Others want to introduce features of the seeker service (drama, special lighting and sound, performance music, etc.) into the Sunday morning service.

The other model influencing Churches of Christ is third wave charismatic worship described by church growth expert C. Peter Wagner and others.<sup>22</sup> Again, the change agents do not propose that worship should become completely charismatic, but that charismatic elements be brought into worship.<sup>23</sup>

Admittedly, those calling for change tend to be eclectic in their choice of worship styles, but most choose elements from the seeker or charismatic models. Significantly, these choices are not being made so much on theological grounds, but more often on pragmatic considerations: the seeker and charismatic churches are the ones who appear to be growing by adapting most to the culture. Both of these models draw on the Church Growth Movement. Both use the strategy of reducing theology to a core of “non-negotiable” beliefs. All other beliefs and practices can

and should be changed to accommodate different cultures and subcultures. In contemporary America, this inescapably means adapting the Christian faith to the expansive, pragmatic, affective, egoist, consumerist consciousness of urban culture, including the various “lifestyle enclaves” of American suburbia.<sup>24</sup>

This reduction of theology to a few non-negotiables is legitimated by the familiar Restoration call to be “Christians only.” One wonders whether, to paraphrase Barton W. Stone, some would encourage Churches of Christ to downplay historical commitments and practices and sink into American Evangelicalism at large. By keeping central doctrines few and vague, they would argue, churches can appeal to more people. Whether this tactic promotes faithful churches and holy lives is another question.

Indeed, it remains to be seen if this church growth model can be followed while maintaining those doctrines and practices that have characterized Churches of Christ. While few publicly call for abandoning long-held practices, the worship models being implemented inevitably demand at least a softening of our historical commitments and practices.

For example, contrast the traditional centrality given to weekly communion and believer’s baptism in Churches of Christ with the lack of priority given to communion and the emphasis on baptism of the Holy Spirit over “water baptism” in charismatic worship.<sup>25</sup> Also contrast the practice at Willow Creek, where communion and baptism are intentionally avoided in the Sunday morning service.<sup>26</sup>

Churches of Christ have traditionally practiced congregational singing with an emphasis on the words that are sung, rather than on the music of the hymns. By contrast, a recent writer in Churches of Christ states that the music, not the words, comprises “the most powerful language of the culture.”<sup>27</sup> He then urges churches to adapt their musical worship practices to fit contemporary styles, tastes, and moods. Further, some would suggest the traditional understanding of the role of ministers in Churches of Christ is undergoing major changes. As Quentin Schultze observes, Willow Creek and large charismatic churches, like most Evangelical megachurches, are organized around celebrity preachers who are more like televangelists than traditional ministers.<sup>28</sup> It remains to be seen what long-term effect these Evangelical models will have on the view of ministry and leadership in Churches of Christ.

In summary, many traditional Church of Christ commitments—weekly communion, congregational singing, believer’s baptism by immersion and other practices—are under considerable pressure to change. Even more fundamental than these changes (whether from neglect or by intent), there appears to be a weakening of or even an abandonment of traditional ecclesiology. One suspects this landmark shift reflects both Evangelicalism’s emphasis on individual spirituality and disinterest in church form and tradition, and the ethos of an urban culture of radical individualism.<sup>29</sup> This tendency is illustrated by a recent catechetical book by a Church of Christ publisher that covers Old Testament, New

Testament, Christian living, and even has a chapter on the millennium, but no chapter on the church.<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, the demands and responsibilities required by being part of a church do not appeal to the uncommitted individualism of the contemporary urban ethos. To be sure, urbanized Americans may want a relation to an invisible Jesus whose chief characteristic is undemanding love. But they are far less inclined to accept involvement in a concrete body of human believers who require considerable attention, not to mention sacrifice.

By way of summary observation, this approach to change among Churches of Christ is attended by several risks. One risk is that theology will be sacrificed in an attempt to be culturally relevant. A second risk is that such cultural adaptation carries with it the danger of abandoning many of the doctrines and practices characteristic of Churches of Christ. But if Churches of Christ lose their identity, they lose their ability to witness to culture. Thus, ironically, attempts to make the church relevant may lead it to become completely irrelevant.<sup>31</sup> If Christians are not distinct from the surrounding culture, why should anyone seek to join them?

A third approach taking shape in Churches of Christ also calls for renewal, but in another direction. These voices, sometimes called “neo-conservatives” or “moderates,” have both theological and pastoral concerns.<sup>32</sup> While not opposed to change, they want change to be guided more by biblical and theological criteria, rather than by sociological surveys and marketing analyses. This entails a conscious effort on the part of the church to think theologically.

Church of Christ theology has been uneven. Leaders thought and wrote often about the church to the neglect of other important doctrines. This unevenness can be partially blamed on anti-intellectualism. Much of it, however, is due to the luxury of being a largely Southern rural church through the first half of the twentieth century. Living in a “Bible-belt, Christian” culture, most assumed their religious neighbors agreed on basic moral issues and many fundamental doctrines. This enabled Churches of Christ to emphasize those doctrines where there was significant disagreement, particularly issues of church polity and worship. As a result, Church of Christ theology was spotty at best.

Tragically, while scholars such as David Wells and Mark Noll decry the decline of the evangelical mind, some in Churches of Christ are discounting even our uneven past attempts to do theology as reflecting an outdated Enlightenment rationalism. Under the impact of such arguments, many in Churches of Christ are left with a non-reflective cultural theology that tends to take the form of what Mark Noll calls “mindless evangelicalism.”<sup>33</sup>

Thus historically Churches of Christ have been strongest theologically where evangelicalism is weakest: in its doctrine of the church. When some call on Churches of Christ to reevaluate “rationalistic Enlightenment” theology, this inevitably means a weakening of most of its theology

of the church. Neo-conservatives instead recognize the need to reappropriate what is valuable in Church of Christ ecclesiology and then complement it with theological reflection on other cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. Ideally this reflection should be done not only by scholars, but in the church as a whole.

In addition to a concern for rebuilding biblical and theological foundations, neo-conservatives have evangelistic and pastoral concerns. They argue for a broader theological view of evangelism in Churches of Christ, that goes beyond an exclusive focus on how to attract outsiders. Thus changes made in Churches of Christ should promote both evangelism and the ordering of the life of the church to nurture Christian faith and practice.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, in contrast to the change-agents, neo-conservatives recognize a critical role for tradition. This means both the faith that has been passed down through the ages (the tradition) and those practices the church has developed to implement the passing on of that faith (traditions).<sup>35</sup> A reappropriation of the best of the Restoration tradition entails a return to the common faith practiced through the ages, just as Alexander Campbell himself saw his reforms as a return to “catholic” Christianity.<sup>36</sup> Further, tradition also allows a recovery of the biblical and historical doctrine of anthropology that enables the church to proclaim an alternate vision of the human self and human culture. A culture overwhelmed by on constant unprecedented change urgently needs the stability provided by what T. S. Eliot called “permanent things.” Neo-conservatives maintain that tradition and change are not antithetical. Responsible traditions enable responsible change. Consequently, the neo-conservative call to tradition is not a call to a dead past but to a living present and a hopeful future.

### **Prospects for the Future**

The nature of a paper like this invites one to comment on the future. The authors are not prescient and certainly not prophets. The future is in the hands of God, not the historian or the sociologist. However, in so far as God gives us the wisdom, we do have impressions of what the immediate future of Churches of Christ might include.

The three approaches we have outlined in this paper are overly general descriptions of forces currently at work in Churches of Christ. They are not water-tight positions, but reflect ever-changing alignments within the church. Our impression is that regional and social differences play a significant role in forming these approaches. For example, more tradition-bound congregations found mainly in the South may be more open to the refreshing message of change in the form of freedom from exclusivism. Neo-conservatives, by contrast, generally find themselves in churches that long ago left legalism for an acculturated and thin doctrine of “grace” as permission. As more churches experience the corrosive forces of the urbanization process, they may find they face a common foe and need more than change.

These approaches are thus in flux. The impression is that certain among the change-agents are reassessing their positions and methods. Some frankly admit changes have been made too hastily on unwarranted assumptions and with unforeseen consequences.

Neo-conservatives are being challenged to distinguish their “conservative” conclusions from “right wing” positions in Churches of Christ. Their efforts are hampered by a climate where almost any attempt to recover vital doctrines is quickly associated with the stereotyped positions of a sectarian and exclusivist past. In such a climate, attempts to recover tradition tend to be simply dismissed.

These and other voices are clamoring to be heard in Churches of Christ. But the underlying question is whether Churches of Christ can reclaim biblical and theological ballast sufficient to navigate safely the shoals of contemporary culture. Less metaphorically, it is hard to be a church without knowing the basic teachings of Scripture and the Christian faith. It is hard to be a church without traditions that connect to the wisdom of the past and protect from the shallow and ever-changing fads and whims of the moment. Only if Churches of Christ anchor their identity in the faith handed down can they speak and embody the gospel in urban vessels.

Certain cultural trends, such as “restorationist” or “conservative postmodernism,”<sup>37</sup> may aid in this recovery of tradition, but by and large there is little sociological perspective to encourage optimism about the future of Churches of Christ. Sociologist Clifford Geertz has noted that it is precisely where societies “free” themselves from tradition that they become vulnerable to all kinds of opportunistic ideologies.<sup>38</sup> Churches face a daunting task in a such a time of social upheaval: to discern those voices that speak the truth and hear again the wisdom that has been spoken throughout the ages.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>George M. Marsden, “The Era of Crisis: From Christendom to Pluralism,” *Christianity in America: a Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 285.

<sup>2</sup>Marsden, 286.

<sup>3</sup>Marsden, 287.

<sup>4</sup>See Joseph Wood Knitch, *The Modern Temper* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1929). More recently, see Peter Berger, et. al., *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Random House, 1973).

<sup>5</sup>Robert N. Bellah, et. al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

<sup>6</sup>Bellah, 276.

<sup>7</sup>Bellah, 281.

<sup>8</sup>Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); see also Bellah, 283.

<sup>9</sup>Taylor, *Ethics*, 60-61.

<sup>10</sup>Taylor, *Ethics*, 76.

<sup>11</sup>No doubt this insight was neither more nor less due to sociological factors than insights of Luther, Calvin, or Wesley.

<sup>12</sup>A few years ago one of the authors asked those in a large meeting of Church of Christ ministers to identify a contemporary spiritual problem. The response was overwhelmingly terms like "stress," "lack of self-esteem," "co-dependency," etc.

<sup>13</sup>Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).

<sup>14</sup>For example see R. Lanny Hunter, "Restoration Theology: A Schoolmaster," *Mission Journal* 7 (June 1974), 360.

<sup>15</sup>See Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

<sup>16</sup>See Richard T. Hughes, ed., *The American Quest for the Primitive Church* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988) and C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (Abilene: ACU Press, 1988).

<sup>17</sup>For this contrast see Richard T. Hughes, "The Apocalyptic Origins of Churches of Christ and the Triumph of Modernism," *Religion and American Culture* 2 (Summer 1992), 188-191.

<sup>18</sup>For another treatment of groups currently influential among Churches of Christ, see Douglas Foster, *Will the Circle be Unbroken?* (Abilene: ACU Press, 1994).

<sup>19</sup>This approach characterizes publications such as *The Firm Foundation* and *The Spiritual Sword*. It is also found in certain "schools of preaching" sponsored by particular congregations of the Churches of Christ.

<sup>20</sup>These leaders also refer to themselves as devoted to reform and renewal in Churches of Christ. However, the purpose statement of *Wineskins*, a recent journal begun by some of these leaders states, "*Wineskins* is committed to the stimulation of bold but responsible change in the Church of God." The introductory editorial of that issue is entitled, "Does Change Frighten You?" *Wineskins* 1 (May 1992), 3.

<sup>21</sup>One observer of *Wineskins* notes, "A perusal of extant issues suggests that the editorial staff supports the ever growing marketing approach to cultural engagement by the church. This is especially true of Lynn Anderson's feature column on change. It also is found in Anderson's annual workshop, "A Church that Connects." In this workshop Anderson has drawn together much of what he has written in *Wineskins*. It is concerned primarily with developing new liturgical forms that an unchurched culture can identify with." Stanley O. Reid, "Develop and Test an Evangelistic Workshop..." (D.Min. diss., Southern Methodist University, 1994), 152-153.

<sup>22</sup>C. Peter Wagner, *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit* (Ann Arbor: Vine Books, 1988).

<sup>23</sup>Currently discussion in Churches of Christ on the Holy Spirit is being limited by many to a narrow set of concerns about worship: "Is there enough enthusiasm in our singing? Can we raise our hands? How does worship make us feel?" One questions whether biblical and theological understandings of the Holy Spirit can be adequately recovered in this fashion. Interestingly the most significant recent book on the Holy Spirit is by the charismatic scholar Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994).

<sup>24</sup>Bellah, 71-75.

<sup>25</sup>Randolph W. Sly, "A Charismatic Theology of the Lord's Supper," in *The Sacred Actions of Christian Worship* (Nashville: Star Song, 1994), 247.

<sup>26</sup>Steve Burdan, "Alternative Views of the Sacraments in Seekers' Service/Believers' Worship" in *Ibid.*, 60-61.

<sup>27</sup>Lynn Anderson, *Navigating the Winds of Change* (West Monroe, Louisiana: Howard Publishing, 1994), 118.

<sup>28</sup>This makes these churches "the most like televangelism in style and substance," Quentin J. Schultze, *Televangelism and American Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 220.

<sup>29</sup>Evangelical scholars Nathan O. Hatch and Michael S. Hamilton lament the lack of an Evangelical ecclesiology in D. G. Hart, ed., *Reckoning with the Past* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 408-409.

<sup>30</sup>Alton Howard, *Foundations of Faith* (West Monroe, Louisiana: Howard Publishing, 1993).

<sup>31</sup>Peter L. Berger warns "More importantly, if the Church (or, for that matter, individual Christians) gives up the transcendent core of the tradition in order to placate this or that alleged spirit of the times, what is given up is the most precious truth that has been entrusted."<sup>32</sup>This approach is reflected in publications such as *Christian Studies* (formerly

the *Faculty Bulletin of the Institute for Christian Studies*) and *Christianity and Contemporary Culture* (a new quarterly associated with Oklahoma Christian University).

<sup>33</sup>Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

<sup>34</sup>See James W. Thompson, "What Happened to Evangelism?" and Michael R. Weed, "Evangelism, Ethics, and Eschatological Existence" in *Christian Studies* 10 (1989). See also Allan J. McNicol, "Sectarian Lifestyle: An Alternative Moral Vision in the First and Twentieth Centuries," *Faculty Bulletin* (Institute for Christian Studies) 3 (1982), 17-35.

<sup>35</sup>See Paul L. Watson, "Passing on the Tradition," *Faculty Bulletin* 4 (1983), 5-11; Michael R. Weed, "A Tradition at Risk," *Christian Studies* 11:2 (Spring 1991), 31-40.

<sup>36</sup>See Gary Holloway, "Both Catholic and Protestant: Alexander Campbell and Tradition," *Christian Studies* 11:2 (Spring 1991), 31-40.

<sup>37</sup>See David Ray Griffin, et. al., *Varieties of Postmodern Theology* (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), 5.

<sup>38</sup>Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 219.

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## **A Letter from J. A. Lincoln to Elmer L. Lincoln, His Son**

Pauline, Texas.  
October 20, 1916.

Mr. Elmer L. Lincoln  
Attorney at law  
Linden, Texas.

Dear Son:

For some years past my children and quite a lot of near friends have been urging me to write a few reminiscences of my life and work as a preacher, and as I am growing old, having passed the days allotted to men, I thought it best to commit it to you, and after I am gone you can transfer it to them.

I was born July 15, 1846, in Lincoln County, Tenn. My father came to Texas in March, 1850, and settled in Washington County, Texas, and remained here till January, 1859.

My father was a mill right and carpenter and was away from home most of his time. I was one of those active energetic boys and could never bear to be idle, hence when I was not at work I was in meanness and soon got the reputation of being the worst boy in the neighborhood. But I was always studious when not in mischief and I especially loved the Bible and have part of the old Bible out of which my mother taught me to read. My mother started me to school at six years of age and I could read well then, but schools were scarce and very poor as well as ourselves, and I graduated after the war between the states at Elm College on banks of San Gabriel River near Rockdale, having gone to school in all about seven months. I worked at various things as a boy from peddling chickens, eggs, butter and ducks, plowing, hoeing, running wild cattle and wild broncos of which I was an expert, but never forgot to read my Bible.

My mother was a Missionary Baptist, and father was a Hard Shell Baptist in principle. Providence is kind to people sometimes, and they do not know it. Our lot was hard and we were poor, and father was trying to pay for a place, but just three miles from home was a little band of disciples (called "Campbellites") who met every Lord's Day. My mother would let me go over and play with "A good boy", but this good boy's mother would make both of us go over and meet with that little band and I soon took it all in and was ready to argue mother out of Baptistism and father out of Hard-Shellism, but they would not let me argue when I was getting the best of it, but I kept slipping in pointed passages.

In 1860 Dr. Kendrick was going to hold a “camp meeting” in three miles of our home and I told father about it and I proposed to keep the baby and other children while he and mother attended. They began going on Friday night and continued till Monday night when they both made the “good confession”. On their return home I heard them say “this is a new turn in our lives and we must live up to it.” I jumped out of bed and shouted, the first and last time in my life. My father had been a rough man and ruled us children with an iron rod, but he soon became the most tender-hearted, loving father I ever knew. Oh, how often I’ve been with him in meetings since and saw his consecrated tears roll down his cheeks and his lips moving in prayer while I was preaching! But he rests in peace.

Father and mother expected me to make the confession at the same meeting but I deferred it until July, the third Sunday night in 1861, when Brother Pennington, a gawky young preacher was preaching, and I was baptized the next day by W. F. Hamblin. Thus, I began my career as a Christian at 15 years of age.

I then began reading my Bible more assiduously than ever, not that I really expected to preach, for I knew my education was deficient, but I thought to inform myself, so as to be an efficient elder, when my age and experience [sic] became sufficient. “But man proposes and God disposes”. About this time an old, consecrated preacher named Jones, over 80 years, made an appointment for me near where Rockdale now stands, then came and told me about it, and insisted that I could fill it and must do so. This was 1st Sunday in September, 1861. I went and filled it best I could, broke the bread for them, and extended an invitation and two girls came forward and made the confession. That night I tried it again, and three more came, and I remained over Monday to baptize. I reached home afternoon and father says “young man, what kept you so long, when I needed the horse?” I replied I was baptizing these people. He replied “The Holy Moses”, but he never gave me any licking.

After the ice was broke, I kept on doing the best I could, till latter part of 1862, when I had to go into the army. The circumstances of my going into the army were peculiar. My father was conscripted, but I was not of age to go but proposed to go in his place and make a good soldier, but he refused until I told him plainly I would not stay and take the burden of the family and if he went I would go in a different direction. At Austin, on the first roll call, I refused to answer to father’s name. I made them insert my name, then procured an unlimited furlough for father, and he never served a day in the army and I filled my own place as a volunteer. At the close of the war he was happy and so was I.

My first three months in the army would not bear close investigation,

but I soon saw I would go to wreck religiously unless I turned back to the right path. Then I set about and organized a "Camp church and prayer meeting" with all professed christians and took charge of it and had service as often as we could. If an older preacher came along I insisted on him preaching, when no one else was there I did the best I could.

It would be impossible for me to tell of the number of funerals I held over the remains of poor soldiers who were killed or died of disease or accident. I shudder to think of it yet.

When I came out of the army I was destitute and without any education, could not even write my name in script. In writing home to mother I would print the letters out of my Bible, but in a short time I managed to get some hogs and moved them to a ranch to fatten on acorns and kept a bachelor's hall and succeeded fairly well, especially as it was there I met the one who was to be more than life to me. We were married January, 1866, and she immediately suggested that she would give me lessons in her elementary school books, if I was inclined to do so. She was but sixteen, but had fine opportunities and was a good scholar for her age and times, and I learned very fast for four years when she died leaving me the oldest child, a boy. During these years I acquired the habit of reading good books which I have never given up. This great sorrow put me all out to sea so far as life's plans. When I married her she was a Baptist and believed the doctrine very strongly, and I suggested that I would suspend preaching and we would read the Bible together to which she agreed. We had read the New Testament throughout twice when she went to hear my father and he preached on "Conversion of the Pentacostians" when she came forward and made the "good confession" and was baptized. After this I resumed my work as a preacher and she was a great help to me and very patient with me in my ignorance. The Lord seemed to prosper my work and I built up several new congregations and helped some old ones to a better life and liberality.

I could not think of going into all the details of my life, and hardship in those days. It would be too long.

Having to care for an infant boy I gave up all idea of getting more education and married the second time to a sister of my first wife, which proved to be as happy as my first marriage, though entirely different in the temperament [sic]. The second wife was a born housekeeper and money-maker, loving wife and child-raiser all combined in one. Her judgment in business was almost unerring. We lived happily together for twelve years when she died at Brenham in 1882 when I was pastor of the church there. She left me five of her own children and the first boy, making six little children to care for and continue my work.

These were strenuous days with me. The calls were so many and so insistent, they could not be denied and I made every shift possible to

leave some one to take care of the children and never lost an appointment. That year with all my sorrows and anxieties I baptized 1300 people, besides receiving a large lot from other churches, and many "backsliders". In these sorrows I learned the true meaning of "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth", and that "Our God will compensate". This activity was my safety valve of life. Had I sat still I would have lost my reason.

As I look back now I stand amazed how I raised and educated eleven children on the meagre support I received. I can count only about four churches in those days that paid a decent salary. Many churches promised to pay but bankrupted on their promise, then call me back to do the same thing.

In my later life I have been more fortunate perhaps because I had more sense and would not let them do me that way, but when I began to force payments I lost my popularity, but I sometimes thought I had too much popularity. But, seriously, I loved the church and I loved the brethren and would sacrifice my time, money and strength to help them, money or no money.

In 1877 I went to Elgin, Texas. There were perhaps a dozen brethren and several sisters. They began to plead poverty as soon as I landed off the train. I preached ten days, had thirty baptisms and a number "otherwise", and I brought the meeting to a close with no collection. One old fellow said "he thought they had done well, they boarded me". In the evening I walked along the railroad expecting the train. A Presbyterian came up and complimented me on the meeting and said "Did they give you a liberal collection?" I answered not a cent, and he remarked "How are you going home?" I said I would catch on to the train, ride as far as they will let me, and walk the rest of the 50 miles home. He dug out a \$5.00 bill and said "take this as my part of the contribution". I said "Thank you, the Lord is good and some Presbyterians are just like him".

This one instance will suffice to give you an insight to the hardships of our early preachers.

My preaching was done in private houses, school houses and churches, or wherever opportunity offered, often with one small grease lamp, till about 1870 when times began to improve.

It would be impossible for me to try and tell all the places I visited, for I went all the time from 1870 till the present, except three years back, and my work was wonderfully blest. In 1879 I moved to Lee County, Texas. The Society was in a terrible state. All honest men were afraid to open their doors at night for fear of being killed or robbed by thieves. Mob law was running in full force and the officers were unable to preserve order. I began a systematic campaign of preaching in every school house and church that I could get into and built up churches in

many sections. In three years the Sheriff told the people I "had done more good than all the officers." Many old hardened sinners who had answered to every court for stealing for twenty years came to Jesus, in a short time would be Elders or Deacons in the church.

After my second wife died in 1882 I moved back to my farm in Lee Country so as to better keep my children with me, and provide for them. It was while living here I married your mother, (Miss Fannie Parker) who took charge of my children and raised them and became the mother of five, making eleven children we raised.

Of course, you children knew no better or lovelier woman or devoted wife ever lived, and I will add I will add no better "stepmother".

In 1884 we moved to Davilla, Texas. I refused an offer of \$1500 at Palestine, Texas, to take the evangelistic work in Milam County, Texas, at \$800.00 because I was raised there and wanted to see my old associates become Christians, and I will add I never got the \$800.00.

The churches have been good to me in the main. Some of them have bankrupted on their promise to me and left me in bad shape many times, but I have never been mistreated but once and I have always been fully appreciated I thought for my ability. In meetings with other preachers I was nearly always the favorite, when I did not think I deserved to be so.

I have preached with many great men and some small ones. Only one preacher has acted rude toward me that I remember. I have noted the envious preachers were the small ones and generally the uneducated. It seems a mystery to me yet how our churches and preachers have loved me and esteemed me when I have had such poor opportunity, and I thought done such bungling work. I could write of many incidents that would be instructive and amusing, but in a running sketch like this would take too much time and space.

I have never been able to tell which I was the better adapted for, the evangelistic work or a pastorate, though I have succeeded in the evangelistic very well, having baptized 11,678 persons. I wish I had kept a record of the funerals and marriages but have not, but it would be immense.

Your mother and I have come to our home and built it up preparatory to our departure, or at least one of us. I still have the harness on and no church can put me on the shelf, for I will never place my living with them again but will serve them the best I can in a humble way.

It is a great joy to me to know of the success of our younger preachers, knowing there is an effort to educate our worthy though poor young



## ***Just As I Lived It***

*by Lester G. McAllister*

(Recalling events occurring during a 70-plus year fellowship in the Stone-Campbell Movement.)

Those of us who attended the World's Fair, also known as "A Century of Progress," held in Chicago in 1933 can never forget the thrill of "The World of Tomorrow" which was the fair's theme. There was a wonderful "Skyride," portraying advanced rapid transit, a "House of Tomorrow" and a "Hall of Science" demonstrating all kinds of technology as well as other exhibits imagining the future.

In the midst of all the futuristic buildings and displays there was a "Hall of Religion." What would one find in such an exhibit? Upon entering the building one was caught up in the utter simplicity of the interior. At the far end of the small, rectangular room was an open Bible. Other than that there was little else other than a bit of indirect lighting. The message was clear; in "The World of Tomorrow" religious faith would be much the same as that of the past. All else may change but faith is eternal and remains the same from age to age. Even the religious pluralism of today cannot change the basic truth demonstrated in that "Hall of Religion" over 60 years ago.

### **William Henry Harding Named Fund**

Harding was born near Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1861. He married Susan Elizabeth Meyers in 1883. As a sailor early in life he learned the carpenter trade and became a master carpenter. Studying by night and taking courses by mail he became a preacher in 1888. In Canada he served churches at Summerside, West Goren, Lord's Cove and then he came to the United States where he served at Taylorsville, IL; Harristown, IL; Blue Mound, IL; Scott City, KS; and Marion, IL before going back to Canada. This Named Fund was established by a gift from the estate of the late Mr. and Mrs. Paul Harding, Mr. William Harding's son.

# THE ORDER OF STONE-CAMPBELL FELLOWSHIP CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO MEMBERSHIP

More than forty individuals or couples have pledged their support to the Historical Society in an on-going fashion. These persons have named the Historical Society in a permanent gift through their estates. You are invited to consider joining this group. The President of the Historical Society would be happy to talk with you about your interest in helping to provide permanent funds for the future of the Society. It can be done through an Annuity, a Trust Agreement, naming the Society in your Will, through the gift of personal property, or life insurance.

The following persons have taken this step to insure the financial future of the Historical Society. We are pleased to name them as Members of the Order of Stone-Campbell Fellowship.

Mrs. Joseph M. Applegate  
David and Elaine Branaman  
Jack Kemper Carmichael  
Ruth and Malcolm Ferguson  
Dr. and Mrs. Leroy Garrett  
Janey and Edwin Gleaves  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Harding (Deceased)  
Roland and Kitty Huff  
Dr. and Mrs. Willis R. Jones  
The Rev. and Mrs. John W. Lambert  
Lester G. McAllister  
David and Donna McWhirter  
Helen Swann Mann (Deceased)  
J. Edward and Louise Moseley  
(J. Edward - Deceased)  
G. Bronson and Mary Netterville  
John B. Nolan

Dr. Ronald E. Osborn  
Elvin Perry and Jeannette Rankin Byers  
(Elvin - Deceased)  
Lester and Mary Catherine Rickman  
(Lester - Deceased)  
Wade B. and Margaret E. Rubick  
Charles J. and Katherine M. Russell  
Mary D. and James M. Seale  
Dr. Howard E. Short  
N. E. Sloan  
Helen F. Spaulding  
Joe A. and Nancy Vaughn Stalcup  
Harold R. and Evelyn N. Watkins  
Mrs. George H. Watson  
Eva Jean Wrather

Those who wish to remain anonymous

A cordial invitation is extended to you to join this dedicated group of persons in the Order of Stone-Campbell Fellowship. Please use the form below to indicate your interest or concern. Mail it to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1101 19th Ave. S., Nashville, TN37212-2196.

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I am interested in the possibility of making a permanent gift to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

\_\_\_\_ Please send me more information about the Order of Stone-Campbell Fellowship.

\_\_\_\_ Please contact me personally.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_